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R L

Just then a negro stepped suddenly from behind the bushes along the road and startled Sandhelo so that he promptly sat up on his haunches to get a better look at the apparition. Page 49.

"The Camp-Fire Girls on the Open Road."

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD

OR, GLORIFY WORK

By HILDEGARD G. FREY

AUTHOR OF
The Camp Fire Girls Series

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CAMP FIRE GIRLS SERIES

By HILDEGARD G. FREY

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or, The Winnebago's Go Camping

The Camp Fire Girls at School
or, The Wohelo Weavers

The Camp Fire Girls at Onoway House
or, The Magic Garden

The Camp Fire Girls Go Motoring
or, Along the Road That Leads the Way

The Camp Fire Girls Larks and Pranks
or, The House of the Open Door

The Camp Fire Girls on Ellen's Isle
or, the Trail of the Seven Cedars

The Camp Fire Girls on the Open Road
or, Glorify Work

The Camp Fire Girls Do Their Bit
or, Over The Top With the Winnebago's

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THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

Oct. 1, 19—.

Dear First-and-Onlys:

When I got to the post-office to-day and found there was no letter from you, my heart sank right through the bottom of my number seven boots and buried itself in the mud under the doorsill. All day long I had had a feeling that there would be a letter, and that hope kept me up nobly through the trying ordeal of attempting to teach spelling and geography and arithmetic to a roomful of children of assorted ages who seem as determined not to learn as I am determined to teach them. It sustained and soothed me through the exciting process of "settling" Absalom Butts, the fourteen-year-old bully of the class, with whom I have a preliminary skir-

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mish every day in the week before recitations can begin; and through the equally trying business of listening to his dull-witted sister, Clarissa, spell "example" forty ways but the right way, and then dissolve into inevitable tears. When school was out I was as limp as a rag, and so thankful it was Friday night that I could have kissed the calendar. I fairly "sic"ed Sandhelo along the road to the post-office, expecting to revel in the bale of news from my belovéds that was awaiting me, but when I got there and the post box was bare the last button burst off the mantle of my philosophy and left me naked to the cold winds of disappointment. A whole orphan asylum with the mumps on both sides would have been gay and chipper compared to me when I turned Sandhelo's head homeward and started on the six-mile drive.

It had been raining for more than a week, a steady, warmish, sickening drizzle, that had taken all the curl out of my spirits and left them hanging in dejected, stringy wisps. I couldn't help feeling how well the weather matched my state of mind as I drove homeward. The whole landscape was one gray blur, and the tall weeds that bordered the road

on both sides wept unconsolably on each other's shoulders, their tears mingling in a stream down their stems. I could almost hear them sob. The muddy yellow road wound endlessly past empty, barren fields, and seemed to hold out no promise of ever arriving anywhere in particular. All my life I have hated that aimlessly winding road, just as I have always hated those empty, barren fields. They have always seemed so shiftless, so utterly unambitious. I can't help thinking that this corner of Arkansas was made out of the scraps that were left after everything else was finished. How father ever came to take up land here when he had the whole state to choose from is one of the seven things we will never know till the coming of the Cocqcigrues. It's as flat as a pancake, and, for the most part, treeless. The few trees there are seem to be ashamed to be caught growing in such a place, and make themselves as small as possible. The land is stony and barren and sterile, neither very good for farming or grazing. The only certain thing about the rainfall is that it is certain to come at the wrong time, and upset all your plans. "Principal rivers, there are none; principal mountains—I'm the only

one," as Alice-in-Wonderland used to say. But father has always been the kind of man that gets the worst of every bargain.

Now, you unvaryingly cheerful Winnebagos, go ahead and sniff contemptuously when you breathe the damp vapors rising from this epistle, and hear the pitiful moans issuing therefrom. "For shame, Katherine!" I can hear you saying, in superior tones, "to get low in your mind so soon! Why, you haven't come to the first turn in the Open Road, and you've gone lame already. Where is the Torch that you started out with so gaily flaring? Quenched completely by the first shower! Katherine Adams, you big baby, straighten up your face, this minute and stop blubbering!"

But oh, you round pegs in your nice smooth, round holes, you have never been a stranger in a familiar land! You have never known what it was to be out of tune with everything around you. Oh, why wasn't I built to admire vast stretches of nothing, content to dwell among untrodden ways and be a Maid whom there were none to praise and very few to love, and all that Wordsworth business? Why do crickets and grasshoppers and owls make

me feel as though I'd lost my last friend, instead of impressing me with the sociability of Nature? Why don't I rejoice that I've got the whole road to myself, instead of wishing that it were jammed with automobiles and trolley cars, and swarming with people? Why did Fate set me down on a backwoods farm when my only desire in life is to dwell in a house by the side of the road where the circus parade of life is continually passing? Why am I not like the other people in this section, with whom ignorance is bliss, grammar an unknown quantity, and culture a thing to be sneered at?

Although I can't see them, I know that somewhere to the north, just beyond the horizon, the mountains lift their great frowning heads, and ever since I can remember I have looked upon them as a fence which shut me out from the big bustling world, and over which I would climb some day. Just as Napoleon said, "Beyond the Alps lies Italy," so I thought, "Beyond the Ozarks lies my world."

I don't believe I had my nose out of a book for half an hour at a time in those early days. I went without new clothes to buy them, and got up early and worked late to get my chores done so that I

might have more time to read. When I was twelve years old I had learned all that the teacher in a little school at the cross roads could teach me, and then I went to the high school in the little town of Spencer, six miles away, traveling the distance twice every day. When there was a horse available I rode, if not, I walked. But whether riding or walking, I always had a book in my hand, and read as I went along. It often happened that, being deep in the fortunes of my story book friends, I did not notice when old Major ambled off the road in quest of a nibble of clover, and would sometimes come to with a start to find myself lying in the ditch. The neighbors thought my actions scandalous and pitied my father and mother because they had such a good-for-nothing daughter.

All this time my father was getting poorer and poorer. He changed from farming to cotton raising and then made a failure of that, and finally, in despair, he turned to raising horses, not beautiful race horses like you read about in stories, but wiry little cow ponies that the cattlemen use. For some unaccountable reason he had good luck in this line for three years in succession, and a year or so after

I had finished this little one-horse high school there was enough money for me to climb over my Ozark fence and go and play in the land of my dreams. One wonderful year, that surpassed in reality anything I had ever pictured in imagination, and then the sky fell, and here I am, inside the fence once more.

Not that I am sorry I came back, no sirree! Father was so pleased and touched to think I gave up my college course and came home that he chirked up right away and started in from the beginning once more to pay the mortgage off the land and the stock, and mother is feeling well enough to be up almost all day now; but to-day I just couldn't help shedding a few perfectly good tears over what I might be doing instead of what I am.

A flock of wild geese, headed south, flew above my head in a dark triangle, and honked derisively at me as they passed. "Not even a goose would stop off in this dismal country!" I exclaimed aloud. Then, simply wild for sympathy from someone, I slid off Sandhelo's back and stood there, ankle deep in the yellow mud, and put my arms around his neck.

"Oh, Sandhelo," I croaked dismally, "you're all I have left of my wonderful year up north. You love me, don't you?"

But Sandhelo looked unfeelingly over my shoulder at the rain splashing down into the road and yawned elaborately right in my face. There are times when Sandhelo shows no more feeling than Eeny-Meeny. Seeing there was no sympathy to be had from him, I climbed on his back again and rode grimly home, trying to resign myself to a life of school teaching at the cross roads, ending in an early death from boredom.

Father was nowhere about when I rode into the stableyard, and the door into the stable was shut. I slid it back, with Sandhelo nosing at my arm all the while.

"Oh, you're affectionate enough now that you want your dinner," I couldn't help saying a little spitefully. Then my heart melted toward him, and, with my arm around his neck, we walked in together. Inside of Sandhelo's stall I ran into something and jumped as if I had been shot. In the dusk I could make out the figure of a man sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall.

"Is that you, Father?" I asked, while Sandhelo blinked in astonishment at this invasion of his premises. There was no answer from the man on the floor. Why I wasn't more excited I don't know, but I calmly took the lantern down from the hook and lit it and held it in front of me. The light showed the man in Sandhelo's stall to be sound asleep, with his hand leaned back against the wooden partition. He had a black beard and his face was all streaked with mud and dirt, and there was mud even in his matted hair. He had no hat on. His clothes were all covered with mud and one sleeve of his coat was torn partly out.

Sandhelo put down his nose and sniffed inquiringly at the stranger's feet. Without ceremony I thrust the lantern right into the man's face.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" I said, loudly and firmly. The man stirred and opened his eyes, and then sat up suddenly, blinking at the light.

"Who are you?" I repeated sternly. The man stared at me stupidly for an instant; then he passed his hand over his forehead and stumbled to his feet.

"Who am I?" he repeated wildly; then his face

screwed up into a frightful grimace and with a groan he crumpled up on the floor. Leaving Sandhelo still standing there gazing at him in mild astonishment, I ran out calling for father.

Father came presently and took a long look at the man in the stall, and then, without asking any questions, he got a wet cloth and laid it on his head. That washed some of the mud off and showed a big bruise on his forehead over his left eye. Father called the man that helps with the horses.

"Help me carry this man into the house," he said shortly.

"But Father," I said, "you surely aren't going to carry that man into the house? All dirty like that!"

Father gave me one look and I said no more. Together father and Jim Wiggin lifted the stranger from the floor and started toward the house with him, while I capered around in my excitement and finally ran on ahead to tell mother. They carried him into the kitchen and laid him down on the old lounge and tried to bring him around with smelling salts and things. But he just kept on talking and muttering to himself, and never opened his eyes.

And that's what he's still doing, while I'm off in

my room writing this. It was five o'clock when we brought him in, and now it's after ten and he hasn't come to his senses yet. There isn't a thing in his pockets to show who he is or where he came from.

I feel so strange since I found that man there. I'm not a bit low in my mind any more, like I was this afternoon. I have a curious feeling as if I had passed a turn in the road and come upon something new and wonderful.

Forget the lengthy moan I indulged in at the beginning of this letter, will you, and think of me as gay and chipper as ever.

Yours in Wohelo,

KATHERINE.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

OCT. 15, 19—.

DARLING WINNIES:

And to think, after all that fuss I made about not getting a letter from you that day, I didn't have time to open it for three whole days after it finally arrived! You remember where I left off the last time, with the strange man I had found in Sandhelo's stable out of his head on the kitchen lounge? Well, he kept on like that, lying with his eyes shut and occasionally saying a word or two that didn't make sense, all that night and all the next day. Then on Sunday he developed a high fever and began to rave. He shouted at the top of his voice until he was hoarse; always about somebody pursuing him and whom he was trying to run away from. Then he began to jump up and try to run outdoors, until we had to bar the door. It took all father and Jim Wiggin and I could do to keep him

on the lounge. We had a pretty exciting time of it, I can tell you. Of course, all the uproar upset mother and she had another spell with her heart and took to her bed, and by Tuesday night things got so strenuous that I had to dismiss school for the rest of the week and keep all my ten fingers in the domestic pie.

I don't know who rejoiced more over the unexpected lapse from lessons, the scholars or myself. I never saw a group of children who were so constitutionally opposed to learning as the twenty-two stony-faced specimens of "hoomanity" that I had to deal with in that little shanty of a school. They'd rather be ignorant than educated any day. I just can't make them do the homework I give them. Every day it's the same story. They haven't done their examples and they haven't learned their spelling; they haven't studied their geography. The only way I can get them to study their lessons is to keep them in after school and stand over them while they do it. Their only motto seems to be, "Pa and ma didn't have no education and they got along, so why should we bother?"

The families from which these children come are

what is known in this section as "Hard-uppers," people who are and have always been "hard up." Nearly everybody around here is a Hard-upper. If they weren't they wouldn't be here. The land is so poor that nobody will pay any price for it, so it has drifted into the hands of shiftless people who couldn't get along anywhere, and they work it in a backward, inefficient sort of way and make such a bare living that you couldn't call it a living at all. They live in little houses that aren't much more than cabins—some of them have only one or two rooms in them—and haven't one of the comforts that you girls think you absolutely couldn't live without. They have no books, no pictures, no magazines. It's no wonder the children are stony-faced when I try to shower blessings upon them in the form of spelling and grammar; they know they won't have a mite of use for them if they do learn them, so why take the trouble?

"What a dreadful set of people!" I can hear you say disdainfully. "How can you stand it among such poor trash?"

O my Belovéds, I have a sad admission to make. I am a Hard-upper myself! My father, while he is

the dearest daddy in the world, never had a scrap of business ability; that's how he came to live in this made-out-of-the-scraps-after-everything-else-was-made corner of Arkansas. He never had any education either, though it wasn't because he didn't want it. He doesn't care a rap for reading; all he cares for is horses. We live in a shack, too, though it has four rooms and is much better than most around here. We never had any books or magazines, either, except the ones for which I sacrificed everything else I wanted to buy. But I wanted to learn,—oh, how I wanted to learn!—and that's where I differed altogether from the rest of the Hard-uppers. They're still wagging their heads about the way I used to walk along the road reading. The very first week I taught school this year I was taking Absalom Butts (mentioned in my former epistle) to task for speaking saucily to me, and thinking to impress him with the dignity of my position I said, "Do you know whom you're talking to?"

And he answered back impudently, "Yer Bill Adamses good-for-nothing daughter, that's who you are!"

You see what I'm up against? Those children hear their parents make such remarks about me and they haven't the slightest respect for me. Did you know that I only got this job of teaching because nobody else would take it? Absalom Butts' father, who is about the only man around here who isn't a Hard-upper, and is the most influential man in the community because he can talk the loudest, held out against me to the very end, declaring I hadn't enough sense to come in out of the rain. As he is president of the school board in this township —the whole thing is a farce, but the members are tremendously impressed with their own dignity— it pretty nearly ended up in your little Katherine not getting any school to teach this winter, but when one applicant after another came and saw and turned up her nose, it became a question of me or no schoolmarm, so they gave me the place, but with much misgiving. I had become very much discouraged over the whole business, for I really needed the money, and began to consider myself a regular idiot, but father said I needn't worry very much about being considered a good-for-nothing by Elijah Butts; his whole grudge against me rose from the

fact that he had wanted to marry my mother when she was young and had never forgiven father for beating him to it. That cheered me up considerably, and I determined to swallow no slights from the family of Butts.

Since then it's been nip and tuck between us. Young Absalom is a big, overgrown gawk of fourteen with no brain for anything but mischief. His chief aim in life just now is to think up something to annoy me. I ignore him as much as possible so as not to give him the satisfaction of knowing he can annoy me, but about every three days we have a regular pitched battle, and it keeps me worn out. His sister Clarissa hasn't enough brain for mischief, but her constant flow of tears is nearly as bad as his impudence.

Taken all in all, you can guess that I didn't shed any tears about having to close the school that Tuesday to help take care of the sick man. Anything, even sitting on a delirious stranger, was a relief from the constant warfare of teaching school. It was in the midst of this mess that your letter came, and lay three whole days before I had time to open it.

On Saturday the sick man stopped raving and struggling and lay perfectly motionless. Jim Wiggin looked at his white, sunken face, and remarked oracularly, "He's a goner."

Even father shook his head and asked me to ride Sandhelo over to Spencer and fetch the doctor again. I went, feeling queer and shaky. Nobody had ever died in our house and the thought gave me a chill. I wished he had never come, because the business had upset mother so. Besides that, the man himself bothered me. Who was he, wandering around like that among strangers and dying in the house of a man he had never seen? How could we notify his family—if he had a family? I couldn't help thinking how dreadful it would be if my father were to be taken sick away from home like that, and we never knowing what had become of him. I was quite low in my mind again by the time I had come back with the doctor.

But while I had been away a change came over the sick man. He still lay like dead with his eyes closed, but he seemed to be breathing differently. The doctor said he was asleep; the fever had left him. He wasn't going to die under a strange roof

after all. When he wakened he was conscious, but the doctor wouldn't let us ask him any questions. He slept nearly all day Sunday and on Monday I went back to school. When I came home Monday night I had the surprise of my young life. When I looked over at the lounge to see how the sick man was to-day I saw, not a man, but a boy lying there. A white-faced boy with a sensitive, beautiful mouth, wan cheeks and great black eyes that seemed to be the biggest part of his face. My books clattered to the floor in my astonishment. Father came in just then and laughed at my amazed face.

"Quite a different-looking bird, isn't he?" he said. "The doctor was in again to-day and shaved him. It does make quite a difference, now, doesn't it?" he finished.

Difference! I should say it did! I had thought all the while that he was a man, because he wore a beard; it had never occurred to me that the hair had grown out on his face from neglect, and not because he wanted it there.

"I suppose I must have looked frightful," said the boy in a weak voice, but with a smile of amusement in his eyes. Those were the first words I had

heard him speak to anyone, and that was the first time he had had his eyes wide open and looked directly at me. For the life of me I couldn't stop staring at him. I couldn't get over how beautiful he was. He had been so repulsive before, with his hair all matted and his face discolored by bruises; now his hair was clipped short and was very soft and black and shiny. One small transparent hand lay on top of the blanket. He didn't look a day over eighteen.

He lay there half smiling at me and suddenly for no reason at all I felt large and awkward and sloppy. Involuntarily my hand flew to the back of my belt to see if I was coming to pieces, and I stole a stealthy glance at my feet to see if the shoes I had on were mates. I was glad when he closed his eyes and I could slip out of the room unnoticed. I suppose mother wondered why I was so long getting supper ready that night. But the truth of the matter is I spent fifteen minutes hunting through my bureau drawers for that list of rules of neatness that Gladys made out for me last summer, and which I had never thought of once since coming home. I unearthed them at last and applied them carefully

to my toilet before reappearing in the kitchen. My hair was very trying; it *would* hang down in my eyes until at last in desperation I tucked it under a cap. As a rule I loathe caps. Just as soon as this letter reaches you, Gladys, will you send me that recipe for hand lotion you told me you used? My hands are a fright, all red and rough. Don't wait until the letters from the other girls are ready, but send the recipe right on by return mail.

After supper that night we talked to the man on the couch. At first he seemed very unwilling to tell anything about himself. We finally got from him that his name was Justice Sherman; that he was from Texas, where he had been working on a sheep ranch; that he had left there and gone up into Oklahoma and had worked at various places; that he had gradually worked his way into Arkansas; that he had fallen in with bad men who had attacked and robbed him and left him lying senseless in the road with his head cut open; that he had wandered around several days in the rain half out of his head, trying to get someone to take him in, but he looked so frightful that everyone turned him out and set the dogs on him, until finally he had stumbled over

a stone and broken his ankle and dragged himself into our stable and crept into Sandhelo's stall. That's what had made him crumple up on the floor the day I found him when he tried to get up. He had fainted from the pain.

We asked him if he wouldn't like us to write to his family or his friends and he answered wearily that he had no family and no friends in particular that he would care to notify. Then he closed his eyes and one corner of his mouth drew up as if with pain. Poor fellow, I suppose that ankle did hurt horribly.

Now, you best and dearest of Winnebagos, let the dear Round Robin letter come chirping along just as soon as you can, and I'll promise not to let it lie three days this time before I read it.

Lovingly your

KATHERINE.

GLADYS TO KATHERINE

BROWNELL COLLEGE, OCT. 18, 19—.

DARLING KATHERINE:

Well, we're settled at last, though it did seem at first as though we were going to spend all our college life wandering around with our belongings in our arms. We came a day late and found the room we had arranged for occupied by someone else. Through a mistake it had been assigned to us after it had been once assigned to these other two, so we had to relinquish our claim. The freshman dormitory was full to the eaves and we realized that there wasn't going to be any place for us. We made our roomless plight known and to make up for it we were told there was a vacant double in the sophomore dormitory that we might take provided no sophomores wanted it. We hadn't expected such an honor and sped like the wind after our belongings. The sophomore dormitory is right across from

the freshman one; they are called Paradise and Purgatory, respectively. It sounded awfully funny to us at first to hear the girls asking each other where they were and to hear them answer, "I'm in Paradise," or, "I'm in Purgatory." We were overcome with joy when we discovered that Migwan roomed in Paradise. Our room was way up on the third floor and hers was down on second, but to be under the same roof with her was such a comfort that all our troubles seemed over for good. We just had our things pretty well straightened out and Hinpoha was nailing her shoebag to the closet door when the sky fell and we were informed that a couple of sophomores wanted our room, and, as there was now a vacancy in the freshman dormitory, would we kindly move? So we were thrown out of Paradise and landed in Purgatory after all, and, for the second time that day, we trailed across the campus with our arms full of personal property, strewing table covers and laundry bags in our wake. We didn't have time to straighten out before exams began and for two days we lived like shipwrecked sailors with the goods that had been saved from the wreck piled on the floor and when we wanted anything we had

to rummage for half an hour before we found it. Even after we had survived exams we were half afraid to begin settling for fear we would be ordered to move once more. We couldn't quite believe that we were anchored at last.

The first week went around very fast; we were so busy getting our classes straightened out and learning our way through the different buildings that we didn't have time to feel homesick. But by Saturday the first strangeness had worn off; we had stopped wandering into senior class rooms and professors' committee meetings, but still we hadn't had time to get very well acquainted. Saturday afternoon was perfect weather and most everybody in the house had gone off for a walk, but we had stayed at home to finish putting our room to rights. When everything was finally in place we sat down on the bed and looked at each other. Hinpoha's eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"I want the other Winnebagos!" she declared. "I can't live without them. I want Sahwah and Nakwisi and Medmangi, and I want Katherine! Oh-h-h-h, I want Katherine! How will we ever get along without her here?"

And we both sat there and wanted you so hard that it seemed as if the heavens must open up and drop you down on the bed beside us. Katherine, do you know that you have ruined our whole lives? Why, O why did you come to us only to go away again? You got us so in the habit of looking to you to tell us what to do next that now we aren't able to start a thing for ourselves. We knew that if you had been there with us that first week you would have had the whole house in an uproar and something wonderful would have been happening every minute. But for the life of us we couldn't think of a single thing to do for ourselves.

We were still sitting there steeped in gloom when Migwan came in to see how we were getting on. She had some delicious milk chocolate with her and that cheered Hinpoha up quite a bit. It's going to be a heavenly comfort to have Migwan just ahead of us in college. She knows all the ropes and the teachers and the gossip about the upper classmen and tells us things that keep us from making the ridiculous mistakes so many of the freshmen make all the time.

"But just think how *I* felt here, all alone, last

year," said Migwan. "Perhaps I didn't miss you girls, though! You were still altogether and had Nyoda, but here there wasn't a soul who had ever heard of the Winnebagos. Now it seems like old times again. Think of it, three whole Winnebagos living together almost under the same roof! Didn't we say that night when we had our last Council Fire with Nyoda that although we couldn't be together any more, we were still Winnebagos and were loyal friends and true, and that wherever two Winnebagos should meet, whether it was in the street, or on mid-ocean, or in a far country, right then and there would take place a Winnebago meeting? Why, we're having a Winnebago meeting this very minute!"

"Let's keep on having meetings, as often as we can, just us three," said Hinpoha, "and talk over old times and have 'Counts.' We can call ourselves The Last of the Winnebagos, like the Last of the Mohicans, and our password will be 'Remember!' That means, 'Remember the old days!' "

Migwan smiled a little mysteriously, but she agreed that it was a fine idea.

We three sat down on the floor in a Wohelo

triangle and repeated our Desire and promised to seek beauty in everything that came along, and to give service to all the other girls in college whenever we had the chance, and to pursue knowledge for all we were worth now that there was so much of it on every side of us, and to be trustworthy and obey all the rules to the smallest detail and never cheat at exams, and to glorify work until everybody noticed how well we did everything, and hold on to health by not sitting up late studying and eating horrible messes, and to be happy all the time and try to like every girl in college.

"Let's clasp hands on it," said Hinpoha, and we did, and then stood up and sang "Wohelo for Aye" until the window rattled. (It's awfully loose and rattles at the slightest pretext.)

We had just gotten to the last "Wohelo for Love" when all of a sudden a face appeared at the window. We were all so surprised we stopped short and the last syllable of "Wohelo" was chopped off as if somebody had taken a knife. Our room is on the third floor, and for anyone to look in at the window they would have to be suspended in the air. So when that head appeared without any warning we

all stood petrified and stared open-mouthed. It was a girl's head with very black hair and very red lips. At first the face just looked at us; then when it saw our amazement it grinned from ear to ear in the widest grin I ever saw.

"Did I scare you?" said the face in a voice so rich and deep that we jumped again. "No, I'm not Hamlet, thy father's ghost, I'm Agony, thy next door neighbor. I heard you singing 'Wohelo for Aye' and I just looked in to see if I could believe my ears."

We all ran to the window and then we saw how easily the thing had been done. Our window is right up against the corner of our room and the window in the other room is right next to it, so that all the apparition had to do was lean out of her window and look into ours, which was open from the bottom.

"Come on over!" we urged hospitably.

The apparition withdrew from the window and appeared a moment later in the doorway, leading a second apparition.

"I brought my better half along," said the deep, rich voice again, as the two girls came into the room.

They looked so much alike that we knew at a glance they were sisters. The one who had looked in at the window did the introducing.

"We're the Wing twins," she said, as if she took it for granted that we had heard about them already. "*She's* Oh-Pshaw and I'm Agony."

"Oh-Pshaw and Agony?" we repeated wonderingly, whereupon the twins burst out laughing.

"Oh, those are not our real names," said Agony, "but we've been called that so long that it seems as if they were. Her name's Alta and mine's Agnes. I've been nicknamed Agony ever since I can remember, and Alta got the habit of saying "Oh-Pshaw!" at everything until the girls at the boarding school where we went always called her that and the name stuck. You pronounce it this way, '*Oh*-Pshaw,' with the accent on the 'Oh.'"

We were friends all in a minute. How in the world could you be stiff and formal with two girls whose names were Agony and *Oh*-Pshaw?

"We heard you singing 'Wohelo for Aye,'" Agony explained, "and it made us so homesick we almost went up in smoke. We belonged to the corkingest group back home. It nearly killed us off to go away and leave them."

Here *Oh*-Pshaw broke in and took up the tale. When we heard that song coming from next door Agony squealed, 'Camp Fire Girls!' and began to dance a jig. She wouldn't wait until I got my hair done so we could come over and call; she just stretched her neck until it reached into your window. Oh, I'm so glad you're next door to us I could just pass away!" And *Oh*-Pshaw caught Agony around the neck and they both lost their balance on the foot of the bed and rolled over on the pillows.

"I'm sorry you have such dandy nicknames," said Migwan. "If you didn't have them we could call you First Apparition and Second Apparition, like Macbeth, you know. But the ones you have are far superior to anything we could think up now."

Then we told them about the Winnebagos and about you and Sahwah and the rest of them, and how we had formed THE LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS and meant to have meetings right along. Of course, we asked them to come and "Remember" their lost group with us, and they were perfectly wild about it.

"Let's have our first meeting right now," proposed

Agony, "and go on a long hike. It's a scrumptious day."

We flew to get our hats and Hinpoha was in such a hurry that she knocked over the Japanese screen that stands gracefully across one corner of our room and that brought to light the pile of things that we just naturally couldn't fit into the room anywhere and had chucked behind the screen until we decided how to get rid of them. There was Hinpoha's desk lamp, the one with the light green shade with bunches of purple grapes on it—a perfect beauty, only there was no room for it after we'd decided to use mine with the two lamps in it; and an extra rug and a book rack and a Rookwood bowl and quantities of pictures. You see, we'd both brought along enough stuff to furnish a room twice the size of ours.

"Whatever will we do with those things?" sighed Hinpoha in despair.

"Can't you give them to somebody?" suggested Migwan. "That lamp and that vase are perfect beauties. I'd covet them myself if I didn't have more now than I know what to do with."

"The very thing!" said Hinpoha. "Here we

promised not a half hour ago to 'Give Service' all the time, and yet we didn't think of sharing our possessions. To whom shall we give them?"

"To Sally Prindle," said Agony and Oh-Pshaw in one breath.

"Who's Sally Prindle?" asked Hinpoha and I, also in chorus.

"She lives down at the other end of the hall in Purgatory," said Agony, "in that tiny little box of a room at the head of the stairs. She's working her way through college and waits on table for her board and does some of the upstairs work for her room, and she's awfully poor. She hasn't a thing in her room but the bare furniture—not a rug or a picture. She'd probably be crazy to get them."

"Let's give them to her right away," said Hinpoha, beginning to gather things up in her arms. Hinpoha is just like a whirlwind when she gets enthusiastic about anything.

"But how shall we give them to her?" I asked. "We don't know her, and she might feel offended if she thought we had noticed how bare her room was and pitied her. How shall we manage it, Migwan?"

"Don't act as if you pitied her at all," replied Migwan. "Simply knock at her door and tell her you've got your room all furnished and there are some things left over and you're going up and down the corridor trying to find out if anybody has room to take care of them for you until the end of the year. Of course she has room to take them, so it will be very simple."

"Oh, Migwan, what would we do without you?" cried Hinpoha, and nearly dropped the Rookwood bowl trying to hug her with her arms full. "You always know the right thing to do and say."

Agony and Oh-Pshaw stopped into their room on the way up and came out with a leather pillow and an ivory clock to add to the collection. Their room wasn't too full, but they wanted to do something for Sally, too. We had to knock on Sally's door twice before she opened it and we were beginning to be afraid she wasn't at home. When she did come to the door she didn't ask us in; but just stood looking at us and our armful of things as if to ask what we wanted. She was a tall, stoop-shouldered girl with spectacles and a wrinkle running up and down on her forehead between her eyes. The room was

just as bare as Agony had described; it looked like a cell.

"We're making a tour of Purgatory trying to dispose of our surplus furniture," I said, trying to be offhand. "Have you any room to spare?"

"No, I haven't," answered Sally with a snap. "You're the third bunch to-day that's tried to decorate my room for me. When I want any donations I'll ask for them." And she shut the door right in our faces.

We backed away in such a hurry that Agony dropped the clock and it went rolling and bumping down the stairway.

"Of all things!" said Agony. "I wish poor people wouldn't be so disagreeable about it. I'm sure I'd be tickled to death to use anybody's surplus to make up what I lacked. Well, we've tried to 'Give Service' anyway, and if it didn't work it wasn't our fault. I think there ought to be a law about 'Taking Service' as well as Giving. Now let's hurry up and go for our hike before the sun goes down."

We went out and had the most glorious tramp over the hills and found a tiny little village that looks the same as it must have a hundred years ago,

and then we came back and had hot chocolate in a darling little shop that was just jammed with students. Agony and Oh-Pshaw know just quantities of girls and introduced us to dozens, and we went back to Purgatory too happy to think.

"I told you so," said Migwan, as she came into the room with us for a minute to get a book.

"What did you tell us?" asked Hinpoha.

"I meant about us three trying to have meetings just by ourselves and trying to do exactly what we did when we were Winnebagos. It won't work. You'll keep on making new friends all the time that you'll love just as much as the old ones. Don't forget the old Winnebagos, but don't mourn because the old days have come to an end. There's more fun coming to you than you've ever had before in your lives, so be on the lookout for it every minute. 'Remember!' "

Oh, Katherine, we just love college, and the only fly in the ointment is that you aren't here!

Your loving

GLADYS.

P. S. Medmangi writes that she has passed her exams and entered the Medical School. Sahwah is

going to Business College and having the time of her life with shorthand. P.P.S. Hinpoha is dying of curiosity to hear more about the sick man. Please answer by return mail.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

Nov. 1, 19—.

DEAREST WINNIES:

Well, Justice Sherman may be a sheep herder and a son of the pasture, but I hae me doots. I know a hawk from a handsaw if I was born and bred in the backwoods. I know it isn't polite to doubt people's word, and he seemed to be telling an absolutely straight story when he told how he beat his way across from Texas, but for all that there's some mystery about him. His manners betrayed him the first time he ever sat down to the table with us. Even though he limped badly and was still awfully wobbly, he stood behind my mother's chair and shoved it in for her and then hobbled over and did the same for me.

You can see it, can't you? The table set in the kitchen—for our humble cot does not boast of a dining room—father and Jim Wiggin collarless and in their shirtsleeves, and the stranded sheep herder

waiting upon mother and me as if we were queens. For no reason at all I suddenly became abashed. I felt my face flaming to the roots of my hair, and absentmindedly began to eat my soup with a fork, whereat Jim Wiggin set up a great thundering haw! haw! Jim had been a sheep herder before he came to take care of father's horses, and it struck me forcibly just then that there was a wide difference between him and the stranger within our gates.

I said something to father about it that night when we were out in the stable together giving Sandhelo his nightly dole. Father rubbed his nose with the back of his hand, a sign that a thing is of no concern to him.

"Don't you get to worryin' about the stranger's affairs," he advised mildly. "If he's got something he doesn't want to tell, you ain't got no business tryin' to find it out. Tend to your own affairs, I say, and leave others' alone. There ain't nobody goin' to be pestered with embarrassing questions while they're under my roof."

So I promised not to ask any questions. Just about the time the stranger's foot was well enough to walk on, Jim Wiggin stepped on a rusty nail and

laid himself up. Justice Sherman was a godsend just then because men were so hard to get, and father hired him to help with the horses until Jim was about again. Father begged me again at this time not to ask him anything about his past.

"Just as soon as he thinks we're gettin' curious he'll up and leave," he said, "and that would put us in a bad way. Help is so scarce now I don't know where I *would* get an extra man. Seems almost as though the hand of Providence had sent him to us."

It was perfectly true. Since so many men had gone into the army it was next thing to impossible to get any help on the farms except good-for-nothing negroes that weren't worth their salt. It seemed, indeed, an act of Providence to cast an able man at our door just at this juncture. So I promised again not to bother the man with questions.

Indeed, it bade fair to be an easy matter not to ask him any questions. Beyond a few polite words at meals he never said anything at all, and as he had moved his sleeping quarters to a small cabin away from the house I saw very little of him, and I suppose we never would have gotten any better

acquainted if your letter hadn't come that Friday. Friday is the worst day of the week for me, because after five days of constant set-to-ing with Absalom Butts my philosophy is at its lowest ebb. This week was the worst because I had a visitation from the school board to see how I was getting on, and, of course, none of the pupils knew a thing and most of them acted as if the very devil of mischief had gotten into them. Elijah Butts gave me a solemn warning that I would have to keep better order if I wanted to stay in the school, and Absalom, who had been hanging around listening, made an impudent grimace at me and laughed in a taunting manner. If I hadn't needed the money so badly I would have thrown up the job right there.

Then, on top of that, came your letter describing the supergorgeousness of your college rooms, and when I thought of the room I had planned to have at college this winter, adjoining yours, my heart turned to water within me and melancholy marked me for its own. I wept large and pearly tears which Niagara-ed over the end of my nose and sizzled on the hot stove, as I stood in the kitchen stirring a pudding for supper. Get the effect, do

you? Me standing there with the spoon in one hand and your letter in the other, doing the Niobe act, quite oblivious to the fact that I was not the only person in the county. I was just in the act of swallowing a small rapid which had gotten sidetracked from the main channel and gone whirlpooling down my Sunday throat, when a voice behind me said, "Did you get bad news in your letter?"

I jumped so I dropped the letter right into the pudding. I made a savage dab at my eyes with the corner of my apron and wheeled around furiously. There stood the Justice Sherman person looking at me with his solemn black eyes. I was ready to die with shame at being caught.

"No, I didn't," I exploded, mopping my face vehemently with my apron, and thereby capping the climax. For while I had been reading your letter and absently stirring the pudding it had slopped over and run down the front of my apron, and, of course, I had to use just that part to wipe my face with. The pudding was huckleberry, and what it did to my features is beyond description. I caught one glimpse of myself in the mirror over the sink and then I sank down into a chair and just yelled.

Justice Sherman doubled up against the door frame in a regular spasm of mirth, although he tried not to make much noise about it. Finally he bolted out of the door and came back with a basin of water from the pump, which he set down beside me.

"Here," he said, "remove the marks of bloody carnage, before you scare the wolf from the door."

So I scrubbed, wishing all the while that he would go away, and still furious for having made such a spectacle of myself. But he stayed around, and when I resembled a human being once more (if I ever could be said to resemble one), he came over and handed me the letter, which he had fished out of the pudding.

"Here's the fatal missive," he said, "or would you rather leave it in the pudding?"

"Throw it into the fire," I commanded.

"That's the right way," he said approvingly. "I always burn bad news myself."

"It wasn't bad news," I insisted.

"Then why the tears?" he inquired curiously. "Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean——"

He was smiling, but somehow I had a feeling that he was trying to cheer me up and not making fun

of me. I was so low in my mind that afternoon that anyone who acted in the least degree sympathetic was destined to fall a victim. Before I knew it I had told him of my shipwrecked hopes and how your letter had opened the flood gates of disappointment and nearly put out the kitchen fire.

"College—you!" I heard him exclaim under his breath. He stared at me solemnly for a moment and then he exclaimed, "O tempora, O mores! What's to hinder?"

"What's to hinder?" I repeated blankly.

"Yes," he said, "having the room anyway."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why," he explained, "you have a room of your own, haven't you? Why don't you fix it up just the way you had planned to have your room in college? Then you can go there and study and make believe you're in college."

I stared at him open-mouthed. "Make-believe has never been my long suit," I said.

"Come on," he urged. "I'll help you fix it up. If you have any more tears prepare to shed them now into the paint pot and dissolve the paint."

Before I knew what had happened we had laid

forcible hands on the bare little cell I had indifferently been inhabiting all these years and transformed it into the study of my dreams. We cut a window in the side that faces in the direction of the mountains and made a corking window seat out of a packing case, on which I piled cushions stuffed with thistle down. We papered the whole place with light yellow paper, tacked up my last year's school pennants and put up a book shelf. This last proved to be a delusion and a snare, because one end of it came down in the middle of the night not long afterward and all the books came tobogganing on top of me in bed. As a finishing touch, I brought out the snowshoes and painted paddle that were a relic of my Golden Age, and which I had never had the heart to unpack since I came home. When finished the effect was quite epic, though I suppose it would make Hinpoha's artistic eye water.

Of course, it will never make up for not going to college, but it helped some, and in working at it I got very well acquainted with Justice Sherman all of a sudden. We had long talks about everything under the sun, and he continually bubbled over with funny sayings. He confided to me that he had

never been so surprised in all his life as when I told him I wanted to go to college. You see, he had thought we were like the other poor whites in the neighborhood, and I was like the other girls he had seen. He didn't take any interest in me until I bowled him over with the statement that I had already passed my college entrance exams.

All this time I never hinted that I suspected he was not the simple sheep herder he pretended to be. I had given father my word and, of course, had to keep it. But one afternoon the Fates had their fingers crossed, and Pandora like, I got my foot in it. I had driven Justice over to Spencer in the rattledy old cart with Sandhelo. On the way we talked of many things, and I came home surer than ever that he was no sheep herder. Once when the conversation lagged and in the silence Sandhelo's heels seemed to be beating out a tune as they clicked along, I remarked ruminatingly, "There's a line in Virgil that is supposed to imitate the sound of galloping horses."

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit angulo campam,"

quoted Justice promptly.

So he was on quoting terms with Virgil! But I remembered my promise and made no remarks.

A little later I was telling about the winter hike we had taken on snowshoes last year.

"You ought to see the sport they have on snowshoes in Switzerland," he began with kindling eyes. Then he broke off suddenly and changed the subject.

So Texas sheep herders learn their trade in Switzerland! But again I yanked on the curb rein of my curiosity. I apparently took no notice of his remark, for just then a negro stepped suddenly from behind the bushes along the road and startled Sandhelo so that he promptly became temperamental and sat up on his haunches to get a better look at the apparition, and the mess he made of the harness furnished us plenty of theme for conversation for the next ten minutes.

"Lord, what an ape," remarked Justice, gazing after the departing form of the negro shambling along the road, "he looks like the things you see in nightmares."

Accustomed as I was to seeing low-down niggers, this one struck me as being the worst specimen na-

ture had ever produced. He had the features of a baboon, and the flapping rags of the grotesque garments he wore made him look like a wild creature.

"Do you have many such intellectual-looking gentlemen around here?" asked Justice, twisting his neck around for a final look at the fellow. "I'd hate to meet that professor at the dark of the moon."

"Oh, they're really not as bad as they look," I replied. "They look like apes, but they're quite harmless. They're shiftless to the last degree, but not violent. They're too lazy to do any mischief."

"Just the same, I'd rather not get into an argument with that particular brother, if it's all the same to you," answered Justice. "He looks like mischief to me."

"He *doesn't* look like a prize entry in a beauty contest," I admitted.

With all that talk about the negro Justice's remark about Switzerland went unheeded, but I didn't forget it just the same. I thought about it all the rest of the afternoon and it was as plain as the nose on your face that there was some mystery about Justice Sherman. A sheep herder who spouted Vir-

gil at a touch, quoted continually from the classics, had refined manners and had traveled abroad, couldn't hide his light under a bushel very well. Another thing; he wasn't a Texan as he had led us to believe. He talked with the crisp, clear accent of the North, and the fuss he made about the negro in the road that afternoon betrayed the fact that he was no southerner. Nobody around here pays any attention to niggers, no matter how tattered they are. We're used to them, but northerners always make a fuss.

The question bubbled up and down in my mind, keeping time to the bubbling of the soup on the stove; why was this educated and refined young man working for thirty dollars a month as a handy man around horses on a third-rate stock farm in this God-forsaken part of the country? Then a suspicion flashed into my mind and at the dreadful thought I stopped stirring with the upraised spoon frozen in mid-air. Then I gathered my wits together and started resolutely for the table. I had promised father I would never ask Justice Sherman anything about his past, but here was something that swept aside all personal obligations and promises.

I found him with father in the stable working over a sick colt. I marched straight up to him and began without any preamble.

"See here, Justice Sherman," I said, "are you hiding yourself to avoid military service? Are you a slacker?"

Justice Sherman straightened up and looked at me with flashing eyes. "No, I'm not!" he shouted in a voice quite unlike his.

I never saw anyone in such a rage. His face was as red as a beet and his hair actually stood on end. "I registered for the service," he went on hotly, "and wasn't called in the draft. I tried to enlist and they wouldn't take me. I was under weight and had a weak throat. If anyone thinks I'm a slacker, I'll——" Here he choked and had a violent coughing spell.

I stared at him, dazed. I never thought he could get so angry. He looked at me with hostile, indignant eyes. Then he straightened up stiffly and walked out of the stable.

"I won't stay here any longer," he exploded, still at the boiling point. "I won't be insulted."

"I apologize," I said humbly. "I spoke in haste. Won't you please consider it unsaid?"

No, he wouldn't consider it unsaid. He wouldn't listen to father's pathetic plea not to leave him without a helper. We suspected him of being a slacker and that finished it. He would leave immediately. Down the road he marched as fast as he could go without ever turning his head.

A worm in the dust was much too exalted to describe the way I felt. With the best of intentions I had precipitated a calamity, taking away father's best helper at a critical time, to say nothing of my losing him as a companion. I was too disgusted with myself to live and chopped wood to relieve my feelings. After supper I hitched up Sandhelo and drove to Spencer to post a letter. I am not in the least sentimental—you know that—but all along the road I kept seeing things that reminded me of Justice Sherman and the fun we had had together. Now that he was gone the days ahead of me seemed suddenly very empty, and desolation laid a firm hand on my ankle.

Also, I had an uncomfortable recollection that it was right along here we had met the horrid negro,

and I became filled with fear that I would meet him again. The fear grew, and turned into absolute panic when I approached that same clump of bushes and in the dusk saw a figure rise from behind them and lurch toward the road. I pulled Sandhelo up sharply, thinking to turn around and flee in the opposite direction, but Sandhelo refused to be turned. When I pulled him up he sat back and mixed up the harness so he got the bit into his teeth, and then he jumped up and went straight on forward, with a squeal of mischief. When we were opposite the figure in the road Sandhelo stopped short and poked his nose forward just the way he used to do when Justice Sherman came into his stall.

"Hello," said a voice in the darkness, and then I saw that the figure in the road was Justice Sherman. His bad ankle had given out on him and he had been sitting there on the ground waiting for some vehicle to come along and give him a lift to Spencer.

"Get in," I said briefly, helping him up, and he got in beside me without a word. We drove to Spencer in silence and he made no move to get out when we got there. I mailed my letter and then

turned and drove homeward. About half way home he spoke up and apologized for being so hasty, and wondered if father would take him back again. I reassured him heartly and we were on the old footing of intimacy by the time we reached home.

We found father standing in front of the house talking to a negro whom we recognized as the one we had met in the road that afternoon. Father greeted Justice Sherman with joy and relief.

"You pretty nearly came back too late," he said. "Here I was just hiring a man to take your place." Then he turned to the negro and said, "It's all off, Solomon. I don't need you. My own man has come back. You go along and get a job somewhere else."

The negro shuffled off and I fancied that he looked rather resentful at being sent away.

"Father," I said, when the creature was out of earshot, "you surely weren't going to hire that ape to work here?"

"Why not?" answered father. "I have to have a man to help with the horses, and this fellow came up to the door and asked for work, so I promised him a job."

"But he's such a terrible looking thing," I said.

Father only laughed and dismissed the subject with a wave of his hands. "I wasn't hiring him for his looks," he answered. "He said he could handle horses and that was enough for me."

So Justice Sherman came back to us and the subject of military service was never broached again.

About a week after his return, and when Jim Wiggin was able to be about again, Justice Sherman walked into the kitchen with a mincing air quite unlike his ordinary free stride. He had been to Spencer for the mail.

"Tread softly when you see me," he advised. "I'm a perfessor, I am."

I looked up inquiringly from the potato I was paring.

"Behold in me," he went on, "the entire faculty of the Spencer High School. I am instructor in Latin, Greek, mathematics, science, history, English and dramatics; also civics and economics."

"You don't mean really?" I asked.

"Really and truly, for sartain sure," he repeated. "The last faculty got drafted and left the school in a bad way. I heard about it down at the post-office this afternoon and went over and applied for

the job. The hardened warriors that compose the school board fell for me to a man. I recited one line of Latin and they applauded to the echo; I recited a line of gibberish and told them it was Greek, and they wept with delight at the purity of my accent. Then they cautiously inquired if I was qualified to teach any other branches and I told them that I also included in my repertoire cooking, dressmaking and millinery. This last remark was intended to be facetious, but those solemn old birds took it seriously and forthwith broke into loud hosannas. I was somewhat mystified at the outbreak until I gathered from bits of conversation that the extravagant township of Spencer had intended to hire two high school teachers this year, as the last incumbent's accomplishments had been rather brief and fleeting, but what was the use, as one pious old hairpin by the name of Butts delicately put it, what was the use of paying two teachers when one feller could do the hull thing himself? Then he shook me feelingly by the hand and said he knowed I was a bargain the minute he laid eyes on me. O Tempora, O Mores! Papers were brought and shoved into my yielding hands, the writ duly executed, and I

passed out of the door a fully fledged 'perfessor' with a six-months' contract. Smile on me, please, I'm a bargain!" And he danced a hornpipe in the middle of the floor until the dishes rattled in the cupboard.

I stared at him speechless. He teach high school? And the things he mentioned as being able to teach! History, French, mathematics, physics, literature, philosophy, Latin, Greek! Quite a well-rounded sheep herder, this! The mystery about him deepened. It was clear now that he was a college graduate. Again I revised my estimate as to his age, and decided he must be about twenty-three or four. Why would he be willing to teach a farce of a high school like the one in Spencer?

Then in the midst of my puzzling it came over me that I did not want him to leave us, and that I would miss him terribly. Of course, he would go to live in Spencer.

"Are you going to board with any of the school board?" I asked jealously, that being what the last "faculty" had done.

"Board with the Board?" he repeated. "Neat expression, that. Not that I know of. I haven't been

requested to vacate my present quarters yet, or do I understand that you are even now serving notice?"

A thrill of joy shot through me. Maybe he would still live in the little cabin on our farm.

"I thought of course you would rather live near the school," I said. "It's six miles from here. Why don't you?"

" 'I would dwell with thee, merry grasshopper,' " he quoted. "That is, if I am kindly permitted to do so."

And so we settled it. He is to ride with Sandhelo in the cart every day as far as my school, then drive on to Spencer, and stop for me on the way home. What fun it is going to be!

Yours, *summa cum felicitate,*

KATHERINE.

P. S. Sandhelo sends three large and loving hee-haws.

SAHWAH TO KATHERINE

Nov. 10, 19—.

DARLING K:

This big old town is like the Deserted Village since you and the other Winnies went away. For the first few weeks it was simply ghastly; there wasn't a tree or a telephone pole that didn't remind me of the good times we used to have. Do you realize that I am the sole survivor of our once large and lusty crew? Migwan and Hinpoha and Gladys are at Brownell; Veronica is in New York; Nakwisi has gone to California with her aunt; Medmangi is in town, but she is locked up in a nasty old hospital learning to be a doctor in double quick time so she can go abroad with the Red Cross. Nothing is nice the way it used to be. I like to go to Business College, of course, and there are lots of pleasant girls there, but they aren't my Winnies. I get invited to things, and I go and enjoy myself

after a fashion, but the tang is gone. It's like ice cream with the cream left out.

I went to the House of the Open Door one Saturday afternoon and poked around a bit, but I didn't stay very long; the loneliness seemed to grab hold of me with a bony hand. Everything was just the way we had left it the night of our last Ceremonial Meeting—do you realize that we never went out after that? There was the candle grease on the floor where Hinpoha's emotion had overcome her and made her hand wobble so she spilled the melted wax all out of her candlestick. There were the scattered bones of our Indian pottery dish that you knocked off the shelf making the gestures to your "Wotes for Wimmen" speech. There was the Indian bed all sagged down on one side where we had all sat on Nyoda at once.

It all brought back last year so plainly that it seemed as if you must everyone come bouncing out of the corners presently. But you didn't come, and by and by I went down the ladder to the Sandwiches' Lodge. That was just as bad as our nook upstairs. The gym apparatus was there, just as it used to be, with the mat on the floor where they used to roll

Slim, and beside it the wreck of a chair that Slim had sat down on too suddenly.

Poor Slim! He tried to enlist in every branch of the service, but, of course, they wouldn't take him; he was too fat. He starved himself and drank vinegar and water for a week and then went the rounds again, hoping he had lost enough to make him eligible, and was horribly cut up when he found he had gained instead. He was quite inconsolable for a while and went off to college with the firm determination to trim himself down somehow. Captain has gone to Yale, so he can be a Yale graduate like his father and go along with him to the class reunions. Munson McKee has enlisted in the navy and the Bottomless Pitt in the Ambulance Corps. The rest of the Sandwiches have gone away to school, too.

The boards creaked mournfully under my feet as I moved around, and it seemed to me that the old building was just as lonesome for you as I was.

"You ought to be proud," I said aloud to the walls, "that you ever sheltered the Sandwich Club, because now you are going to be honored above all

other barns," and I hung in the window the Service Flag with the two stars that I had brought with me. It looked very splendid; but it suddenly made the place seem strange and unfamiliar. Here was something that did not belong to the old days. It is so hard to realize that the boys who used to wrestle around here have gone to war.

I went out and closed the door, but outside I lingered a minute to look sadly up at the little window in the end where the candle always used to burn on Ceremonial nights.

"Good-bye, House of the Open Door," I said, "we've had lots of good times in you and nobody can ever take them away from us. We've got to stop playing now for awhile and Glorify Work. We're going to do our bit, and you must do yours, too, by standing up proudly through all winds and weather and showing your service flag. Some day we'll all come back to you, or else the Winnebago spirit will come back in somebody else, and you must be ready."

I said good-bye to the House of the Open Door with the hand sign of fire and a military salute, and went away feeling a heavy sense of responsibility,

because in all this big lonely city I was the only one left to uphold the honor of the Winnebagos.

And hoop-la! I did it, too, all by myself. The week after I had paid the visit to the House of the Open Door someone called me on the telephone and wanted to know if this was Miss Sarah Brewster who belonged to the Winnebago Camp Fire Girls, and when I said yes it was the voice informed me that she was Mrs. Lewis, the new Chief Guardian for the city, and President of the Guardians' Association. She went on to say that she wanted to plan a patriotic parade for all the Camp Fire Girls in the city to take part in, and as part of the ceremony to present a large flag to the city. She knew what she wanted all right, but she wasn't sure that she could carry it out, and as she had seen the Winnebagos the time they took part in the Fourth of July pageant, she wanted to know if we would take hold and help her manage the thing. I started to tell her that the Winnebagos weren't here and couldn't help her; then I reflected that I, at least, was left and it was up to me to do what you all would have done if you had been here. So I said yes, I'd be glad to take hold and help make the parade a success.

And, believe me, it was! Can you guess how many girls marched? *Twenty-three hundred!* Glory! I didn't know there were so many girls in the whole world! The line stretched back until you couldn't see the end, and still they kept on coming. And who do you suppose led the parade? Why, *I* did, of all people! And on a *horse!* Carrying the Stars and Stripes on a long staff that fitted into a contrivance on the saddle to hold it firm. Right in front of me marched the Second Regiment Band, and my horse pawed the ground in time to the music until I nearly burst with excitement. After me came the twenty girls, all Torch Bearers, who carried the big flag we were going to present to the city, and behind them came the floats and figures of the pageant.

I must tell you about some of these, and a few of them you'll recognize, because they are our old stunts trimmed up to suit the occasion.

GIVE SERVICE was the most impressive, because it is the most important just now. It was in twelve parts, showing all the different ways in which Camp Fire Girls could serve the nation in the great crisis. There was the Red Cross Float, showing the

girls making surgical dressings and knitting socks and sweaters. Another showed them making clothes for themselves and for other members of the family to cut down the hiring of extra help; and similar floats carried out the same idea in regard to cooking, washing and ironing. Yes ma'am! Washing and ironing! You don't need to turn up your nose. One float was equipped with a complete modern household laundry and the girls on it had their sleeves rolled up to their elbows and were doing up fine waists and dresses in great shape, besides operating electric washing machines and mangles.

One float was just packed full of good things which the girls had cooked without sugar, eggs or white flour, and with fruits and vegetables which they had canned and preserved themselves, while the fertile garden in which said fruits and vegetables had grown came trundling on behind, the girls armed with spades, hoes and rakes. I consumed two sleepless nights and several strenuous afternoons accomplishing that garden on wheels and I want you to know it was a work of art. The plants were all artificial, but they looked most lifelike, indeed.

Besides those things we had groups of girls taking care of children so their mothers could go out and work; and teaching foreign girls how to take care of their own small brothers and sisters, so they'll grow up strong and healthy.

There really seemed to be no end to our usefulness.

Behind the wheeled portion of the parade came hundreds of girls on foot, carrying pennants that stretched clear across the street, with clever slogans on them like this:

DON'T FORGET US, UNCLE SAMMY,
WE'RE ALWAYS ON THE JOB

* * * * * *

YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE WE'RE HERE

* * * * * *

AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING!

* * * * * *

WE ARE PROUD TO LABOR FOR OUR COUNTRY

And the people! Oh, my stars! They lined the streets for thirty blocks, packed in solid from the

store fronts to the curb. And the way they cheered! It made shivers of ecstasy chase up and down my spine, while the tears came to my eyes and a big lump formed in my throat. If you've never heard thousands of people cheering at you, you can't imagine how it feels.

One time when the procession halted at a cross street I saw a fat old man, who I'm sure was a dignified banker, balancing himself on a fireplug so he could see better, and waving his hat like crazy. He finally got so enthusiastic that he fell off the fireplug and landed on his hands and knees in the gutter, where some Boy Scouts picked him up and dusted him off, still feebly waving his hat.

Our line of march eventually brought us out at Lincoln Square, where the presentation of the flag was to take place. We stood in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial monument, and who do you suppose presented the flag? Me again. In the name of all the Camp Fire Girls of the city, I ceremoniously presented it to the Mayor, who accepted it with a flowery speech that beat mine all hollow. Besides presenting the flag I was to help raise it. The pole was there already; it had seen many flag raisings in

its long career and many flags had flapped themselves to shreds on its top. The thing I had to do was fasten our flag to the ropes and pull her up. In this I was to be assisted by a soldier brother of one of the girls who was home on furlough. He was to be standing there at the pole waiting for us, but when the time came he wasn't there. Where he was I hadn't the slightest idea; nor did I have any time to spend wondering. Mrs. Lewis had set her heart on having a man in soldier's uniform help raise the flag; it added so much to the spirit of the occasion. Just at this moment I saw a man in army uniform standing in the crowd at the foot of the monument, very close to me. Without a moment's hesitation I beckoned him imperatively to me. He came and I thrust the rope into his hands, whispering directions as to what he was to do. It all went without a hitch and the crowd never knew that he wasn't the soldier we had planned to have right from the start. We pulled evenly together and the flag slowly unfolded over our heads and went fluttering to the top, while the band crashed out the "Star Spangled Banner." It was glorious! If I had been thrilled through before, I was shaken to my very founda-

tions now. I felt queer and dizzy, and felt myself making funny little gaspy noises in my throat. There was a great chee. from the crowd and the ceremonies were over. The parade marched on to the Armory, where we were to listen to an address by Major Blanchard of the —th Engineers.

The girls had all filed in and found seats when Mrs. Lewis, who was to introduce Major Blanchard, came over to me where I was standing near the stage and said in a tragic tone, "Major Blanchard couldn't come; I've had a telegram. What on earth are we going to do? He was going to tell stories about camp life; the girls will be *so* disappointed not to hear him."

I rubbed my forehead, unable to think of anything that would meet the emergency. An ordinary speaker wouldn't fill the bill at all, I knew, when the girls all had their appetites whetted for a Major.

"We might ask the band to give a concert, and all of us sing patriotic songs," I ventured finally.

"I don't see anything else to do," said Mrs. Lewis, "but I'm *so* disappointed not to have the Major here. The girls are all crazy to hear about the camp."

Just then I caught sight of a uniform outside of the open entrance way.

"Wait a minute," I said, "there's the soldier who helped us raise the flag, standing outside the door. Maybe he'll come in and talk to the girls in place of the Major." I hurried out and buttonholed the soldier. He declined at first, but I wouldn't take no for an answer. I literally pulled him in and chased him up the aisle to the stage.

"But I can't make a speech," he said in an agonized whisper, as we reached the steps of the stage, trying to pull back.

"Don't try to," I answered cheerfully. "Speeches are horrid bores, anyway. Just tell them exactly what you do in camp; that's what they're crazy to hear about."

Mrs. Lewis didn't tell the audience that the speaker was one I had kidnapped in a moment of desperation. She introduced him as a friend of the Major's, who had come to speak in his place. The applause when she introduced him was just as hearty as if he had been the Major himself. The fact that he was a soldier was enough for the girls.

And he brought down the house! He wasn't an

educated man, but he was very witty, and had the gift of telling things so they seemed real. He told little intimate details of camp life from the standpoint of the private as the Major never could have told them. He had us alternately laughing and crying over the little comedies and tragedies of barracks life. He imitated the voices and gestures of his comrades and mimicked the officers until you could see them as plainly as if they stood on the stage. He talked for an hour instead of the half hour the Major was scheduled to speak and when he stopped the air was full of clamorings for more. Private Kittredge had made more of a hit than Major Blanchard could have done.

I never saw a person look so astonished or so pleased as he did at the ovation which followed his speech. He stood there a moment, looking down at the audience with a wistful smile, then he got fiery red and almost ran off the stage.

"I don't know whether to be glad or sorry the Major's not coming," whispered Mrs. Lewis to me under cover of the applause. "The Major's a very fine speaker, but he wouldn't have made such a *human* speech. You certainly have a knack of pick-

ing out able people, Miss Brewster! You chose just the right girls for each part in the pageant."

I didn't acknowledge this compliment as I should have, because I was wondering why our soldier man had looked that way when we applauded him. He would have slipped out of the side door when he came off the stage, but I stopped him and made him wait for the rest of the program. A national fraternity was holding a convention in town that week and members from all the great colleges were in attendance. As it happened, our Major is a member of that fraternity, and, as a mark of esteem for the Camp Fire Girls, he asked the fraternity glee club to sing for us at the close of our patriotic demonstration.

The singers came frolicking in from some banquet they had been attending, in a very frisky mood, and sang one funny song after another until our sides ached from laughing. I stole a glance now and then at Private Kittredge, beside me, but he never noticed. He was drinking in the antics of those carefree college boys with envious, wistful eyes. At the end of their concert the singers turned and faced the great flag that hung down at the back of the stage

and sang an old college song that we had heard sung before, but which had suddenly taken on a new, deep meaning. With their very souls in their voices they sang it:

"Red is for Harvard in that grand old flag,
Columbia can have her white and blue;
And dear old Yale will never fail
To stand by her color true;
Penn and Cornell amid the shot and shell
Were fighting for that torn and tattered rag,
And our college cheer will be
'My Country, 'tis of Thee,'
And Old Glory will be our college flag!"

The effect was electrical. Everybody cheered until they were hoarse. I looked at Private Kittredge. His head was buried in his hands and the tears were trickling out between his fingers. I was too much embarrassed to say anything, and I just sat looking at him until, all of a sudden, he sat up, and reaching out his hand he caught hold of mine and squeezed it until it hurt.

"I'm going back," he said brokenly.

"Going back?" I repeated, bewildered. "Where?"

"Back to camp," he replied. Then he began to speak in a low, husky voice. "I want to tell you something," he said. "I'm not what you think I am. I'm a deserter. That is, I would have been by to-morrow. My leave expires to-night. I wasn't going back. I didn't want to go into the army. I didn't want to fight for the country. I hated the United States. It had never given me a square deal. My father was killed in a factory when I was a baby and my mother never got a cent out of it. She wasn't strong and she worked herself to death trying to support herself and me. I grew up in an orphan asylum where everybody was down on me and made me do all the unpleasant jobs, and at twelve I was adrift in the world. I sold papers in the streets and managed to make a living, but one night I went out with a crowd of boys and some of the older ones knocked a man down and stole his money and the police caught the whole bunch and we were sent to the Reformatory. After that I had a hard time trying to make an honest living because people don't like to hire anyone that's been in the Reformatory. I never had any fun the way

other boys did. I had to live in cheap boarding places because I didn't earn much and nobody that was decent seemed to care to associate with me. I was sick of living that way and wanted to go away to South America where no one would know about the Reformatory, and make a clean start. Then I was drafted. I hated army life, too. All the other fellows got mail and boxes from home and had a big fuss made over them and I didn't have a soul to write to me or send me things. I was given a good deal of kitchen duty to do and everybody looks down on that. I kept getting sorer and sorer all the time and at last I decided to desert. I got a three-days' leave and made up my mind that I wouldn't go back. I was just hanging around the street killing time this afternoon when I saw a crowd and stopped to see what the excitement was about. Then all of a sudden you looked at me and motioned me to come over and help you raise the flag. It was the first time I had ever touched the Stars and Stripes. When the folds fell around my shoulders before she went sailing up, something wakened in me that I had never felt before. I couldn't believe it was I, standing there raising the flag with all those people cheering.

It intoxicated me and carried me along with the parade when it went to the armory. Then again, like the hand of fate, you came out and pulled me in and made me speak to the girls. I had never spoken before anyone in my life. I had never "been in" anything. It made another man of me. All of a sudden I found I did love my country after all. I *did* have something to fight for. I *did* belong somewhere. It *did* thrill me to see Old Glory fluttering out in the wind. That was my country's flag, *my* flag. I was willing to die for it. I'm going back to camp to-night," he finished simply.

I gripped his hand silently, too moved to speak.

All the while we were talking there the crowd had been busy getting their things together and going out and nobody paid any attention to us sitting there in the shadow under the gallery. Now, however, I was aware of somebody approaching directly, and along came the Mayor, gracious and smiling, to shake hands with the speaker of the afternoon.

"Those were rattling good stories you told," he said in his hearty way. "I say, won't you be a guest at a little dinner the frat brothers are giving this

evening, and tell them to the boys? That's the kind of stuff everybody's interested in."

And off went the man who had never had a chance, arm in arm with the Mayor, to be guest of honor at a dinner in the finest hotel in the city!

Jiminy! Do you see what the Winnebagos have gone and done? They've saved a man from being a deserter! I've promised to write to him and get the rest of the girls to write and send him things, and I'll bet that he'll be loyal to the flag to the last gasp.

Now aren't you glad you're a Winnebago?

Your loving old pal,

SAHWAH.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

Nov. 15, 19—.

DEAREST WINNEBAGOS:

You don't happen to know of anyone that would like to employ a good country schoolma'am for the rest of the term, do you? I'm fired; that is, I'll wager all my earthly possessions that I will be at the next session of the Board. The prophet hath spoken truly; and you can't make a silk-purse-carrying schoolmarm out of Katherine Adams.

This morning I woke up with a glouch, which is a combination of a gloom and a grouch, and worse than either. It didn't improve it to have to go to school on such a crisp, cool, ten-mile-walk day and listen to Clarissa Butts stammer out a paragraph in the reader about vegetation around extinct volcanoes, and all the while trying to keep my eye on the rest of the pupils, who were not listening, but throwing spitballs at each other. The worst of it was I didn't blame them a bit for not listening. Why

on earth can't they put something interesting into school readers? Even I, with my insatiable thirst for information, gagged on vegetation around extinct volcanoes. Clarissa's paragraph drew to a halting close and finally stopped with a rising inflection, regardless of my oft-repeated instructions how to behave in the presence of a period, and I had to go through the daily process of correction, which ended as usual with Clarissa in tears and me wondering why I was born.

The next little girl took up the tale in a droning sing-song that was almost as bad as Clarissa's halting delivery, and fed the Glouch until he was twice his original size. The climax came when Absalom Butts, by some feat of legerdemain, pulled the bottom out of his desk and his books suddenly fell to the floor with a crash that shattered the nerves of the entire class. Absalom and some of the other boys snickered out loud; the girls looked at me with anxious expectancy.

I sat up very straight. "Class attention!" I commanded, rapping with my ruler. "Close books and put them away," I ordered next.

Books and papers made a fluttering disappearance,

through which the long-drawn sniffs of Clarissa Butts were plainly audible.

"Get your hats and form in line for dismissal," was the next order that fell on their startled ears.

"She's going to send us home," came to my hearing in a sibilant whisper. Clarissa's sniffs became gurgling sobs as she took her place in the apprehensive line.

"Forward march, and halt outside the door!" I drove them out like sheep before me and then I came out and banged the door shut with a vicious slam. Passing between the two files I divided the ranks into sheep and goats, left and right.

"Class attention!" I called again. "Do you all see that dark spot over there?" said I, pointing to the dim line of trees that marked the beginning of the woods, some seven miles distant.

"Yes, Miss Adams," came the wondering reply.

"Well," I continued, "the left half of the line will take the road around Spencer way, and the right half will take the road around the other way, and the half that gets there last will have to give a show to amuse the winners. We're going to have a hike,

and a picnic. You all have your lunch baskets, haven't you?"

For a minute they stood dazed, looking at me as if they thought I had lost my senses. Clarissa stopped short in the middle of a sob to gape open-mouthed. Come to think of it, I don't believe she ever did finish that sob. I repeated my directions, and taking the youngest girl by the hand I started one half of the line down the road, calling over my shoulder to the other line that they might as well make up their stunts on the way, because they were going to get beaten. But after all it was our side that got there last, because we were mostly girls and I had to carry the littlest ones over some of the rough places.

I sent the boys to gather wood and built up a big fire, and then I proceeded to initiate the crowd into some of the mysteries of camp cookery. I daubed a chicken with clay and baked it with the feathers on, like we used to do last summer on Ellen's Isle, and it would have been splendid if it hadn't been for one small oversight. I forgot to split the chicken open and take the insides out before I put the clay on.

After dinner it was up to me to produce a show

in obedience to my own mandate. None of the rest on my side could help me out, because not one of the blessed chicks had ever done a "stunt" in their lives. The only "prop" I had was a bright red tie, so I proceeded to do the stunt about the goat that ate the two red shirts right off the line—you remember the way Sahwah used to bring the house down with it? Well, I had just got to the part where "he heard the whistle; was in great pain——" and, accompanying the action to the music, was down on all fours giving a lifelike imitation of a goat tied to a railroad track, while the delighted boys and girls were doubled up in all stages of mirth, when I heard a sound that resembled the last gasp of a dying elephant. I jumped to my feet and whirled around, and there in the offing were anchored—anchored is the only expression that fits because they were literally rooted to the spot—the entire school board of Spencer township, plus two strange men plus Justice Sherman. The board members and the strangers stood with their jaws dropped down on their chests and their eyes popping out of their heads; Justice had his handkerchief over his mouth and was shaking from head to foot like a sapling in a high wind.

I gave a gasp of dismay which resulted in further developments, for I had the whole red tie stuffed into my mouth with which to flag the train when the time came, and the minute I opened my mouth it billowed out in the breeze. That was the finishing touch. I might have explained away the quadruped attitude as a gymnastic pose, but it takes considerable of an artist to explain away a mouthful of red tie in a schoolmarm. Besides that, I was mud from head to foot, having slid about ten feet for the home plate in a baseball game we had before dinner, so that I presented a front elevation in natural clay effect, broken here and there with elderberries in bas-relief, which had adhered when the can was accidentally spilled over me.

Being acutely conscious of all these facts in every corner of my anatomy did not add to my ease of manner, but I said as nonchalantly as I could, "How do you do, Mr. Butts? How do you do, gentlemen?" Then I added rather lamely, "Pleasant day, is it not?"

Mr. Butts exploded into the same sort of snort as had interrupted me in time to prevent the goat from flagging the train.

"Miss Adams," he said severely, when he had recovered his breath sufficiently to speak, "what does this mean? Why ain't you teaching school to-day? Here comes these here two fellers——" and he jerked his thumb in the direction of the two strangers—"from the new school board over to Sabot Junction, to visit our school, and I takes them over to the schoolhouse and finds it empty and no sign of you or the class. Fine doin's, them! These fellers had their trip for nothin' and they were pretty mad about it I can tell you, and so I thinks I'll drive them over to Kenridge to the schoolhouse there and here on the way I runs into you in the woods, acting like a lunytic. I always said Bill Adams's daughter was plumb crazy and now I'm sure of it."

I stood aghast. How was I to explain to an irate school board that neither I nor the children had felt like going to school to-day and had decided to have a picnic instead, and that the "lunytic actin's" was Sahwah's famous stunt, enacted to add to the hilarity of the occasion? I threw an appealing glance at Justice Sherman, and he sobered up enough to speak.

"You don't understand, Mr. Butts," he said hastily. "Miss Adams *is* teaching school to-day. She is

teaching the children botany and it is sometimes necessary to go out into the woods and study right from Nature. I heard her say that she was going to take the children out the first fine day."

This was outrageous fibbing, but nobly done in a good cause. It was of no avail, however, for Absalom Butts promptly called out importantly, "It ain't either no botany class; it's a picnic. She made us put our books away when we didn't want to and come out here." And he made an impudent grimace at me, accompanied with the usual taunting grin.

Right here I had another surprise of my young life. No sooner had the craven Absalom turned state's evidence when there rose from the masses an unexpected champion. As Elijah Butts began to express his opinion of my "carryin's on" in no veiled terms, his daughter Clarissa, developing a hitherto undreamed of amount of spirit, suddenly threw her arms around my waist and stood there stamping her feet with anger.

"She ain't a lunatic, she ain't a lunatic," she shrilled above her father's gruff tones, "she's nice and I love her!" After which astounding confession she melted into tears and stood there sobbing

and hugging the breath out of me. To my greater astonishment all the other girls immediately followed suit and gathered around me with shielding caresses, turning defiant faces to the upbraiding school board members. The boys made themelves very inconspicuous in the rear, but I caught more than one glowering look cast in the direction of Absalom.

Before this demonstration of affection, Mr. Butts paused in astonishment, and, having hesitated, was lost. He felt he was no longer cock of the walk, and in dignified silence led the way to the surrey standing in the road, with the rest of the school board members and the visitors stalking after. I watched them climb in and drive away, and then the reaction set in and I sat down on the ground and laughed until I cried, while the girls, not sure whether I was laughing or crying, alternately giggled convulsively and soothingly bade me "never mind." I sat up finally and shook the hair out of my eyes and then I discovered that Justice Sherman had not departed with the rest of the delegation, but was sitting on the ground not far away, still shaking with laughter and wiping his eyes on a red-

bordered napkin that had strayed out of a lunch basket. A sudden suspicion seized me.

"Justice," I cried severely, "did you do it?"

"Did I do what?" he asked in a startled tone.

"Find out I was off on a picnic and bring the Board down to visit me?"

Justice threw out his hands in a gesture of denial. "'Thou canst not say I did it, never shake thy gory locks at me,'" he declaimed feelingly. "Where did they come from? They dropped, fair one, like the gentle rain from heaven, upon the place beneath. They came first to my humble dispensary of learning, anxious to show the visiting Solons what a bargain they had captured, and listened feelingly while I conducted a Latin lesson, which impressed them so much they invited me to come along while they gave you the 'once over.' You never saw such an expression in your life as there was on the face of Mr. Butts when he arrived at your place and found it empty. I will remember it to my dying day.

"But what on earth *were* you doing when we found you in the woods?" he finished in a mystified tone.

Then I told him about Sahwah's goat that ate the two red shirts right off the line, and again he laughed until he was weak.

"Some schoolma'am you, for visiting committees to make notes on!" he exclaimed.

"I'm discharged, of course," I remarked, after a moment's silence.

"Oh, maybe not," said Justice soothingly, as we reached home, and he turned off to go to his cabin.

"I don't care if I am," I cried savagely. "I hate that old Board so I wouldn't work for them another day." And I stalked into the house with my head in the air.

But somehow, after I had eaten my supper and begun to write this letter, I began to feel differently. The way the girls stood up for me this afternoon changed my whole attitude toward school teaching. To find out that they actually loved me was the biggest surprise I had ever had in my life. I had hated them so thoroughly along with the school teaching that it had never occurred to me that they did not feel the same way toward me. I suddenly hated myself for my impatience with their stupidity.

Of course they were stupid—how could they be otherwise, poor, pitiful, ill-clad, overworked creatures, coming from such homes as they did? I stopped despising them and was filled only with pity for the narrow, colorless lives they led. That afternoon when they had told me, shyly and wistfully, how much they enjoyed my teaching, I was filled with guilty pangs, because I knew just how much *I* had enjoyed it. That impromptu picnic had quite won their hearts and broken down the barriers between us, and the trouble it had gotten me into crystallized their affection into expression. Now the ice was broken, and I would be able to get more out of them than ever before. The prospect of teaching began to have compensations.

Then suddenly I remembered. I would be discharged after the next meeting of the Board. I would have no opportunity of getting better acquainted with my pupils and leading them in the pleasant paths of knowledge. Just when the drink began to taste sweet I had to go and upset the cup!

And your Katherine, who had hated teaching the poor whites so fiercely all these months, buried her

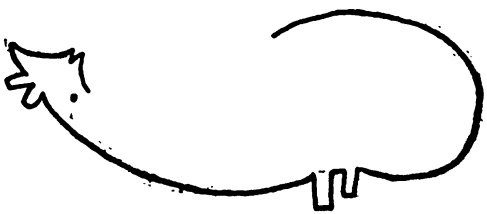
head on her arms and cried bitterly at the thought of having to give it up!

Yours, in tears,

KATHERINE.

HINPOHA TO KATHERINE

BROWNELL COLLEGE, NOV. 25, 19—.



DEAREST KATHERINE:

At first glance I don't suppose you will recognize this sweet little creature, but you ought to, seeing you are his own mother. It's the Pig you drew with your eyes shut in Glady's PIG BOOK last year. Gladys brought the PIG BOOK along with her and the other day we got it out and found your poor little Piggy with the mournful inscription under him, "Where is My Wandering Pig To-night?" He looked so sad and lonesome we knew he was simply pining away for you. His ink has faded perceptibly and he is just a shadow of his

former emphatic self. Migwan looked at it and said, "What charade does it make you think of?"

It was just as plain as the nose on your face, and we all shouted at once, "Pork-you-pine!"

We couldn't bear to leave him there to die of grief and longing, so we transferred him tenderly to this letter and are sending him to his mumsey by Special Delivery. We hope he will pick up immediately upon arrival.

We had Lamb's *Dissertation on Roast Pig* in Literature the other day and were asked to comment upon it, and Agony wrote that she didn't think much of a dissertation on Pig that was written by a Lamb; she thought Bacon could have handled the subject much better!

As ever, your

HINPOHA.

P. S. Here is Piggy's tail; we found it in a corner of the page after we had him transferred.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

DEC. 3, 19—.

DEAR WINNIES:

Hurray! I'm not fired. Why, I wasn't I never will be able to figure out, but its so. A week after the Picnic the Board sat, but not on me. For a while I lived in hourly expectation of forcible eviction, but nothing happened, and I heard from Justice, who stands high in the favor of Elijah Butts and gets inside information about school matters, that nothing was going to be done about it. If Justice had any further details he wouldn't divulge them.

Justice is a queer chap. Although he talks nonsense incessantly, you can get very little information out of him. And the way he puts up with all kinds of inconveniences without complaint is wonderful to me. He must be accustomed to far different surroundings, and yet from his attitude you'd think his little cabin out beyond the stables

was the one place on earth he'd select for an abode. He never even mentioned the fact that the roof leaked badly until I went out there to fetch him and discovered him on top patching it. Then I went inside to see what else could be improved, and the bare, tumble-down-ness of the place struck me forcibly. Light shone through chinks in the walls, the door sill was warped one way and the door another, and there was no sign of the pane that had once been in the window. It was simply a dilapidated cabin, and made no pretence of being anything else. How he could live in it was more than I could see. No light at night but a kerosene lamp, no furniture except what he himself had made from boards, boxes and logs; no carpet on the rough, rotting floor. Why did he choose to live in this cell when he might have taken rooms with any of the school board members over in Spencer?

It was on this occasion that I saw the rough board table under the one window, strewn with pencils, compasses and sheets of paper covered with strange lines and figures.

"What's this?" I asked curiously.

"Nothing, that amounts to anything," replied Jus-

tice, with a queer, dry little laugh. "Once I was fool enough to believe that it did amount to something." He swept the papers together and threw them face downward on the table.

"Tell me about it," I said coaxingly, scenting a secret, possibly a clue to his past.

Justice stared out of the open door for a few moments, his shoulders slumped into a discouraged curve, his face moody and resentful. Then suddenly he threw back his head and squared his shoulders. "It's nothing," he said shortly. "Only, once I thought I had a brilliant idea, and tried to patent it. Then I found out I wasn't as smart as I thought I was, that's all."

"What did you invent?" I asked.

"Oh, just an old electrical device—you probably wouldn't understand the workings of it—to be used in connection with wireless apparatus. It was a thing for recording vibrations and by its use a deaf man could receive wireless messages. I worked four years perfecting it and then thought my fortune was made. But nobody would back me on it. They all laughed at the thing. I got so disgusted one day that I threw the thing into the sad sea. Four

years' work went up at one splash! That was the end of my career as an inventor."

Poor Justice! I sympathized with him so hard that I hardly knew what to say. I knew what that failure must have meant to his proud, sensitive soul. The first failure is always such a blow. It takes considerable experience in failing to be able to do it gracefully. I could see that he didn't want any voluble sympathy from me and that it was such a sore subject that he'd rather not talk about it. I didn't know what to say. Then my eye fell on the sheets on the table. "What are you inventing now?" I asked, to break the silence that was growing awkward.

"Just working on bits of things," he replied, "to pass the time away. You can't experiment with wireless now, you know."

The confidences Justice had made to me almost drove my errand out of my head. It was rather breathless, this having a new side of him turn up every little while. I returned to my original quest for information.

"I came for expert advice," I remarked.

Justice looked up inquiringly. "Shoot," he said.

"Do you suppose," I inquired in a perplexed tone, "that they'd enjoy it just as much if the costumes have to be imaginary?"

Justice's face suddenly became contorted. "They'd probably enjoy wearing, ah—er imaginary costumes if the weather is warm enough," he replied, carefully avoiding my eye.

"Justice Sherman!" I exploded, laughing in spite of myself. "You know very well what I mean. I mean can we have a Ceremonial Meeting in blue calico and imagine it's Ceremonial costumes?"

Justice scratched his head. "It depends upon how much imagination 'we' have," he remarked. "Now, for instance, I know someone not a hundred miles from here who can imagine herself in her college room when it's only make believe, and can do wonderful work in French and mathematics. She——"

"That's enough from you," I interrupted. "The matter is settled. We'll have a Ceremonial Meeting. We'll pretend we've gone traveling and have left our Ceremonial dresses at home. We're a wartime group, anyhow, and ought to do without things."

There now! The secret is out! Your poor stick

of a Katherine is a real Camp Fire Guardian. I wasn't going to tell you at first, but I'm afraid I will have to come to you for advice very often. I have organized my girls into a group and they are entering upon the time of their young lives. Make the hand sign of fire when you meet us, and greet us with the countersign, for we be of the same kindred. Magic spell of Wohelo! By its power even the poor spirited Hard-uppers have become sisters of the incomparable Winnebagos. Wo-He-Lo for aye! We are the tribe of Wenonah, the Eldest Daughter, and our tepee is the schoolhouse.

Of course, as Camp Fire Groups go, we are a very poor sister. We haven't any costumes, any headbands, any honor beads, or any Camp Fire adornments of any kind. I advanced the money to pay the dues, and that was all I could afford. There are so few ways of making money here and most of the families are so poor that I'm afraid we'll never have much to do with. But the girls are so taken up with the idea of Camp Fire that it's a joy to see them. In all their shiftless, drudging lives it had never once occurred to them that there was any fun to be gotten out of work. It's like

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opening up a new world to them. Do you know, I've discovered why they never did the homework I used to give to them. It's because they never had any time at home. There were always so many chores to do. Their people begrudged them the time that they had to be in school and wouldn't hear of any additional time being taken for lessons afterward.

As soon as I heard that I changed the lessons around so they could do all their studying in school. Besides that, I looked some of the schoolbooks in the face and decided that they were hopelessly behind the times, Elijah Butts to the contrary. They were the same books that had been used in this section for twenty-five years.

"What is the use," I said aloud to the spider weaving a web across my desk, "of teaching people antiquated geography and cheap, incorrect editions of history when the thing they need most is to learn how to cook and sew and wash and iron so as to make their homes livable? Why should they waste their precious time reading about things that happened a thousand years ago when they might be taking an active part in the stirring history that is

being made every day in these times? Blind, stubborn, moth-eaten old fogies!" I exclaimed, shaking my fist in the direction of Spencer, where the Board sat.

Right then and there I scrapped the time-honored curriculum and made out a truly Winnebago one. It kept the fundamentals, but in addition it included cooking, sewing, table setting, bed making, camp cookery, singing of popular songs, folk dancing, hiking and stunts. Yes sir, stunts! I teach them stunts as carefully as I teach them spelling and arithmetic. Can you imagine anyone who has never done a stunt in all their lives?

We rigged up a cook stove inside the schoolhouse—if you'd ever see it! The stovepipe comes down every day at the most critical moment. Besides that we have a stone oven outside. Every single day is a picnic. As all of us have to bring our lunch we turned the noon hour into a cooking lesson, and two different girls act as hostesses each day. The boys bring the wood and do the rough work and are our guests at dinner. They all behave pretty well except Absalom Butts, who is given to practical jokes. But as the rest of the boys side

in with me against him, he gets very little applause for his pains and very little help in his mischief. The noon dinners continue to be the chief attraction at the little school at the cross roads. Hardly anybody is ever absent now.

I arranged the new schedule so that while I am teaching the girls the things which are of interest to them alone the boys have something else to do that appeals to them. I give them more advanced arithmetic, and have worked out a system of honor marks for those who do extra problems, with a prize promised at the end of the year. Then I got hold of an old copy of Dan Beard's *New Ideas for Boys* and have turned them loose on that, letting them make anything they choose, and giving credit marks according to how well they accomplish it.

You see what a job I have ahead of me as a Camp Fire Guardian? In order to teach my girls what they must know to win honors, I have had to turn the whole school system inside out, and then, because I couldn't bear to leave the boys out in the cold while the girls are having such a good time, I have to keep thinking up things for them to do, too. It stretches my ingenuity to the breaking point some-

times to get everything in, and keep all sides even.

One afternoon each week I have the girls give to Red Cross work. Every Saturday I drive all the way over to Thomasville, where the nearest Red Cross headquarters branch is, for gauze to make surgical dressings, returning the finished ones the next week. Here's where dull-witted Clarissa Butts outshines all the brighter girls. She can make those dressings faster and better than any of us and her face is fairly radiant while she is working on them. I have made her inspector over the rest to see that there are no wrinkles and no loose threads, and she nearly bursts with importance. For once in her life she is head of the class.

While they fold bandages I read to them about what is going on in the war and what the Red Cross is doing everywhere, and we have beautiful times. The worst trouble around here is getting up to date things to read. There isn't a library within fifty miles and the only books we have are the few I can manage to buy and those that Justice Sherman has. Would you mind sending out a magazine once in a while after you have finished reading it?

We had our first ceremonial meeting last night in

blue calico instead of ceremonial gowns, but it didn't make a mite of difference. We felt the magic spell of it just the same and promised with all our hearts to seek beauty and give service and all the other things in the Wood Gatherers' Desire. That is the wonderful thing about Camp Fire. It makes you have exactly the same feelings whether you learn it in a mansion or in a shack, in an exclusive girls' school or in a third-rate country schoolhouse. If Nyoda only could have seen us! Of all people to whom I had expected to pass on the Torch, this group of Arkansas Hard-Uppers would have been the very last to occur to me. Was this what she meant, I wonder?

Yours, trying hard to be a Torch Bearer,

KATHERINE.

HINPOHA TO KATHERINE

DEC. 15, 19—.

DARLING KATHERINE:

There's no use talking, I can never be the same again. My life is wrecked—ruined—blighted; my heart is broken, my faith in Man shattered, but try as I like I can't forget him. His image is graven on my heart, and there it will be until I die. But for all that, I hate him—hate him—hate him! I don't want to be unpatriotic, but I do hope he gets killed in the very first battle he's in. Then at least *she* won't have him! But a few short weeks ago I was a mere child, playing at life, a schoolgirl, carefree and heedless, with no other thought in the world beside winning the freshman basketball championship and surviving midyear's; to-day I am a woman, old in experience, having eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge and found it bitter as gall. And I must bear it all alone, because if I told the girls here they would laugh at me, and some would

be spiteful enough to be glad about it. But I have to tell somebody or explode, and I know you will neither laugh nor tell anybody, being a perfect Tombstone on secrets.

It's really all Agony and Oh-Pshaw's fault anyway, for being born. Not that that actually had anything to do with it, but if they hadn't been born they wouldn't have had any birthday, and if they hadn't had any birthday they wouldn't have given that box party to the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS and I never would have met Captain Bannister.

You will readily understand, Katherine, how I burn to serve my country at a time like this. There is nothing I would not do to save her from the clutches of the enemy. It is all very well to say that woman's part in the war is to knit socks and sweaters and fold bandages and conserve the Food Supply, for that is all that the average woman would be capable of doing anyhow, but as for me, I know that my part is to be a much more definite and a far nobler one. Of course, I do all the other things, too, along with the other Winnies and the whole college, for that matter; joined the Patriotic League,

go to Red Cross two nights a week and go without sugar and wheat as much as possible. When I wrote and told Nyoda that I hadn't eaten one speck of candy for three months except what was given me and was sending the money I usually spent for it to the Belgians, she said I ought to have the Cross of the Legion of Honor, and that "greater love hath no man than this, that he give up the craving of his stomach for his country." You see, Nyoda understands perfectly what it means to have an awful candy hunger gnawing at your vitals like the vulture at the giant's liver and look the other way when you go past a window full of your favorite bon-bons. But somehow candy doesn't seem so satisfying when you know there are little Belgian and French children suffering from a much worse gnawing than candy hunger, and usually dropping the price of a box of bonbons into the Relief Fund stops the craving almost as much as the bonbons themselves would.

But this is only doing what thousands of other girls all over the country are doing and there isn't any individual glory in it. What I long to do is carry the message that saves the army from destruc-

tion, or discover the spy at his nefarious work. If only the chance would come for me to do something like that I could die happy.

Agony and Oh-Pshaw's birthday celebration was quite an event. We had luncheon first at the Golden Dragon, a wonderful new Chinese restaurant that was recently opened, and had chop suey and chow main and other funny things in a little stall lit up with a gorgeous blue and gold lantern. Of course, after that luncheon and the funny toasts we made to the long life and health of Agony and Oh-Pshaw, we felt pretty frolicsome, and by the time we got settled in our seats at the Opera House we were ready to start something. Our seats were in the first row of the balcony, center aisle, and very prominent. I had my knitting along as usual, intending to do a few rows between the acts. I always knit in public places; it sets a good example to other people. Besides, my new knitting bag is too sweet for anything.

I had just got started knitting in the intermission between the first and second acts when the orchestra began to play "Over There," and Agony got an inspiration. "Let's all stand up," she whispered,

"and see how many people will bite and stand up, too."

So, stifling our giggles, we sprang promptly to our feet and stood stiffly at attention. In less than a minute more than half of the audience, not knowing why they should stand up for that piece, but blindly following our lead, gathered up their hats, wraps and programs in their arms and dutifully stood up. Then as soon as they were standing we sat down and laughed at the poor dupes, who sat down in a hurry when they saw us, looking terribly foolish. I haven't seen anything so funny in a long time.

"Stop laughing," said Gladys, giving me a poke with her elbow. "You're shaking the seat so I'm getting seasick." But I couldn't stop.

"Look out, Hinpoha, there goes your knitting," said Migwan. "Catch it, somebody!"

But it was too late. When we stood up I had laid the sock and the ball of yarn on the broad, low rail in front of us, and now the ball had rolled over the edge and dropped down into the audience below, right into the lap of a young man who was sitting on the end seat. He looked up in great surprise and

everybody laughed. They just *roared!* There I stood, leaning over the balcony, hanging on to the sock for dear life and trying to keep it from raveling, and there he stood down below holding onto the ball, and plainly puzzled what to do with it.

"Throw down the sock, silly," whispered Agony, reaching over and pulling my sleeve. "Do you think he's going to throw up the ball?"

I dropped the sock and the man caught it in his other hand and stood there laughing, as he started to wind up the yards and yards of yarn between the ball and the sock. When he had it wound up he brought it upstairs to me. I went out into the corridor to get it. Then for the first time I got a good look a the man. He was dressed in uniform and wore an officer's cap. He was very tall and slim, with black eyes and hair and a small black mustache.

"Here, patriotic little knitting lady," he said, making a deep bow and handing me my knitting. I looked up into his handsome, smiling face, and little needle points began pricking in my spine. His eyes met mine, he smiled, blushed to the roots of his hair and looked away. All in one instant I knew.

I had met my fate. This was my Man, my own. I felt faint and light-headed and all I could see was his black eyes shining like stars. His deep, thrilling voice still rang in my ears. With another low bow he turned to leave me.

"Captain Bannister, at your service," he said.

I went back to my seat with my head swimming. "Patriotic little knitting lady," I found myself whispering under my breath. The girls suddenly seemed awfully young and silly as they sat there giggling at me and at each other. My mind was above all such childish things; it was soaring up in the blue realms of true love. I was glad he was tall and thin. I think fat girls should marry thin men, don't you? And he was dark, too, just the right mate for red-headed me. And he was a Captain in the army! How the other girls would envy me! Some of them had friends who were lieutenants and were quite uppish about it, but none that I knew had a Captain.

Then at another thought my heart stood still. Suppose he should be killed? I pictured myself in deep mourning, wearing on my breast the medal he had won for bravery, which with his dying breath

he had asked his comrades to send to "my wife!" I couldn't help brushing away a tear then and was quite bewildered when Agony poked me and wanted to know if I wasn't ever going to make a move to go home. The show was over and the people were streaming out. I hadn't seen a bit of the last two acts.

Down in the lobby I saw Him again. He was standing by the door talking to another man in uniform. How he stood out among all other men! He was one out of a thousand. My heart beat to suffocation and I couldn't raise my eyes. In a moment more I must pass him. I tried to look straight ahead, but something I couldn't resist drew my head around and I turned and looked straight into his eyes. He tilted back his head and gave me one long, thrilling glance, raised his hand to his cap, then blushed and looked down. Just then Gladys pulled at my sleeve and dragged me over to some girls we knew and we were swept out with the crowd to the sidewalk.

I scarcely knew where I was going. My feet walked along between Gladys and Migwan, but my soul was in the clouds, listening to strains of

heavenly music, while the others squabbled over ice cream flavors and who should stand treat after the show. Ice cream! Ye gods! Who could eat ice cream with their soul seething in love?

From that hour when I had looked into Captain Bannister's eyes and read the truth in them, I was a changed being. I listened in silence to the idle chatter of the girls around me as we walked to and from classes. Their souls were wrapped up in their knitting, in their lessons, in their meals. Agony and Oh-Pshaw were trying to learn a new and difficult back dive and they talked of nothing else night and day. They were constantly at me to come and try it, too, but I sat loftily apart, hugging my delicious secret. As it says in the poem we learned in literature class:

"What were the garden bowers of Thebes to me?"

Like Semele, I scorned the sports of mortals and thought only of my Beloved. I didn't envy her a bit because her Love was Jupiter. What was Jupiter compared to Captain Bannister?

Twice I had seen him since that day in the theater

—had spoken to him, in fact. He was stationed in the recruiting office and one day I happened to be walking past with old Professor Remie and he knew him and stopped and talked and introduced me. As if we needed any introduction! We chatted of commonplaces, but all the while our eyes told volumes. However, soul cannot speak to soul in a public recruiting station where curious eyes are looking on.

I had an errand uptown every day after that. Only once did I see him as I passed the recruiting station, however. Then he was throwing out a Socialist who had tried to stop the recruiting and he didn't see me.

But the next day there came a perfectly huge box of chocolates, addressed quaintly to "Miss Bradford, Somewhere in Purgatory." Inside the box was a card which read:

"The strand you dropped with careless art
Has wound itself around my heart."

Underneath was written "Captain Bannister," in a bold, masculine hand.

I buried the chocolates in the depths of my shirt-

waist box where no profane eye could see them or profane tooth bite into them. I didn't mean to be selfish, but I just couldn't bear to pass *his* chocolates around to the crowd and hear Agony's delighted squeal as she dove into them,

"Come on, girls, have one on Hinpoha's latest crush!"

For Agony has absolutely no understanding of affairs of the heart—everything is a "crush" to her.

The chocolates were fine and I ate a great many of them, thinking of my Captain all the while, and wondering when I would see him again.

"Hinpoha, what on earth is the matter with you?" said Gladys that night. "You didn't eat a bite of supper and you're as pale as a ghost. Have you upset your stomach again?"

I drew myself up haughtily. The idea! To call this delicious turmoil in my bosom an upset stomach! I was glad I looked pale. I am usually as red as a beet. It was more in keeping with the way I felt to be pale.

"I am not myself," I replied loftily, "but it's not my stomach."

"Go to bed, honey," said Gladys, "and I'll bring you a glass of hot water."

I curled up in bed with Captain Bannister's card in my hand under the pillow. I was so happy I felt dizzy. Gladys came back with the hot water and made me drink it in spite of my protests, and, strange to say, I felt much calmer after it.

Needless to say, I couldn't pin my mind down on my lessons. I did such queer things that people began to notice it. For instance, mild old Professor Remie, the chemistry teacher, handed back my paper one day after he had given us a written lesson on the Atomic Theory, and inquired in a puzzled tone if I had meant just what I wrote. I glanced at it and blushed furiously when I realized that I had written down some lines that had been running through my head all day:

"Why do I fearfully cling to thee, Maidenhood?
'Tis but a pearl to be cast in thy waves, O Love!"

Then one day the word went around that He was coming to make a speech in the college chapel. How my heart fluttered! I could hardly sit still in the

seat when he came out on the platform. It seemed as if everyone could hear what my heart was saying. Soon that deep voice of his was filling the room, thrilling me with unearthly things. Again and again his eyes sought mine, full of joyous recognition, of love and longing. I smiled reassuringly, trying to telegraph the message, "Be patient, all will be well."

To myself I was singing, "O Captain, my Captain!"

Unknown to himself, I had seen him before he came into chapel. I was stooping down in the shadow of the gymnasium steps, tying my shoestring, when he came along the walk and was met by Dr. Thorn, our President. They stood there and talked a minute and I heard Captain Bannister say that he was going to Washington that afternoon on the five o'clock train and that he was going directly from the college to the station. He carried a small black handbag, which Dr. Thorn offered to relieve him of, but he said no, he didn't want to leave it out of his hand even for a minute, there were valuable papers in it.

When he came out on the platform I noticed that

he had the bag with him. He set it down on the table while he talked and never got very far away from it. I looked at that bag with deep interest. What was in it? Something terribly important, I knew. I thrilled with pride that my Captain should have such great things to look after, and longed to be of service to him.

His speech came to an end all too soon for me, who could have gone on listening for a week, and he went out before the rest of us were dismissed. No chance to speak to me or give me one word of farewell for the brief separation; only one long, lingering look between us that left me shaken to the soul. Now I knew what the Poet meant when he spoke of "the troth of glance and glance."

I wandered around by myself after he had gone. I didn't desire to speak to any of the girls or have them speak to me. I just wanted to be by myself. Roaming thus I came to the little rustic summerhouse in the park behind the college buildings, and stopped in to rest a moment. It was a lovely mild day, not a bit like winter, and not too cold to sit in a summerhouse and dream. I didn't sit down, though. For on the bark-covered bench I spied

something that brought my heart up into my mouth. It was Captain Bannister's bag. No doubt about it. There was his name on a card tied to the handle. How came it here? They must have shown him around the grounds after his speech and in some way he had put the bag down in here and then gone off and forgotten it. How dreadful he would feel when he found it out!

My mind was made up in a minute. Here was a real chance to "Give Service." If I hurried I could get down to the station and catch him before he got on the train. I made sure from the watchman that he had left the college grounds. I looked at my wrist watch. It was quarter to five. Without a moment's hesitation I picked up the bag and ran out to the street. I caught a car right way and sank down in a seat breathless, but easy in my mind, because the station was only a ten minutes' ride in the car.

Then, of course, something had to happen. A sand wagon was in the cartrack ahead of us and the motorman jingled his bell so furiously that the driver got excited and pulled the lever that dumped the whole load of sand on the car track.

I jumped out of the car and looked wildly up and down the road to see if there was a taxi in sight. There wasn't; nothing but a motor truck from the glue factory. There was something covered with canvas in the back of it, and I knew instinctively that it was a dead horse. Did I hesitate a second? Not I. For the sake of my Captain and my country I would have endured anything. I hailed the driver. "I'll give you a dollar if you'll take me to the station," I panted.

The driver laughed out loud. "This is *some* depoe hack," he said, "but if *you* can stand it I guess *I* can."

With that he gave me a sidewise glance that was meant to be admiring, I suppose, but I froze him with a look and climbed gravely up beside him.

"It is very important that I be there in time for the five o'clock train," I remarked by way of explanation.

"You ain't running away from school, are you?" inquired the driver genially.

"I am *not*," I replied frigidly, and looked loftily past him for the remainder of the five minutes' ride to the station.

I flung the man the dollar and was out of the truck before he had time to say a word, and raced into the long waiting room of the station. I could have shouted with relief when I saw on the blackboard the notice that the five o'clock train for Washington was forty minutes late. I was in time!

But where was Captain Bannister? Nowhere in sight. I walked up and down the length of the waiting room several times, growing more nervous every minute. Suppose that he had discovered that he had left the bag behind and gone back after it only to find it gone? The thought made my blood run cold. Would he come down to the train at all without the bag? Would he not go back and search for it, alarming the whole college? And all the while I had it safe with me! What should I do? Should I go back and run the risk of missing him, or stay and see if he came? One thing I could do. I could telephone back to the college and find out if he had returned for it.

I had just gotten inside the telephone booth and was ringing up the number when there was a commotion in the upper end of the waiting room and a large party of people entered, men and women and

soldiers and young girls, laughing and shrieking and pelting somebody with rice and old shoes. Soon they came past the booth and I caught a glimpse of the bride and groom. The telephone receiver fell out of my hand and my heart stopped beating. For there, in the midst of that crowd, laughing and dodging the showers of rice, and hanging for dear life to the arm of a pretty young girl in a traveling suit, was Captain Bannister, my Captain! I shrank back into the depths of the telephone booth and struggled to swallow the lump in my throat. Bits of talk floated in through the closed door.

"Thought you'd do it up quietly this morning and then sneak out this afternoon without anybody finding it out," I heard a voice shout, as a fresh shower of rice flew through the air.

"Went out and made a speech this afternoon, too, just as unconcerned as if it wasn't his wedding day," said another voice. "Pretty sly, Captain. They ought to put you in the diplomatic service. You'd be an ornament."

I crouched miserably in the telephone booth, trying to collect my scattered thoughts. My Captain was married this morning! How I hated that pretty

girl clinging to him and laughing as the showers of rice fell around her!

Then all of a sudden my hand touched the bag on the floor. The papers! In the excitement of his wedding day he had forgotten them! Well, even if he had, I hadn't. I would still serve my country if it did nearly kill me to go out there and face Captain Bannister. I shut my eyes and prayed for strength. It would have been so easy to slip out and throw the bag over the bridge into the river, and get Captain Bannister into a bad predicament. But I did not waver in my duty. Opening the door of the booth softly, I crept out. Resolutely I approached the crowd and walked right up to Captain Bannister.

"Here are the papers, Captain Bannister," I said in a voice I tried to make coldly sarcastic, as is fitting when talking to a man who has let his wedding make him forget his country's business.

Captain Bannister whirled around and faced me with a look of astonishment that changed to annoyance when he saw the bag. He did not offer to take it from my outstretched hand. He could not look into my eyes. He stood there, his face getting

redder every minute, while the people stared curiously. At last he pulled himself together and took the bag. "Thank you," he said in a flat voice.

A dozen hands pulled the bag away from him. "Let's see the papers, Banny," called several voices. "Are they the plans of your wedding journey or your new home?"

He made a desperate effort to regain possession of the bag, but they kept it away from him and opened it. Then such a roar of laughter went up as I have never heard. Everybody was laughing but the bride, and she looked like a thundercloud. Soon the things from the bag were being handed around and I saw what they were. They were a girl's ballet dress, very flimsy and very short and very much bespangled; a pair of light blue silk stockings and a pair of high-heeled dancing slippers.

Standing on the edge of the crowd I heard one man explain to another, between snorts of laughter, how Captain Bannister had taken part in a show that the soldiers had given a week before and had worn that ballet dress. His bride-to-be had been at the show, and being a very straight-laced sort of a person had been very much shocked at the men dressed

as girls. She didn't know that Captain Bannister had been one of them, and he didn't intend that she should find out. Some of his friends knew this and for a joke they got hold of the handbag in which he had packed his clothes for his wedding journey and hid them away, putting in the ballet dress instead. He found it out on the way out to the college, and conceived the brilliant idea of leaving it there. He figured that a suit like that found in a girls' college would cause no commotion; nothing like what would happen if his bride should find it among his things. But of all things—here the man who was telling all this nearly turned inside out—somebody sees him leave the bag behind and chases after him with it!

I fled without ever looking behind. My heart was broken, my life wrecked, my hopes shattered. My Captain, my Man, whose eyes had told me the secret of his love, was pledged to another! If I hadn't known it beyond any doubt, I wouldn't have believed such perfidy possible. And the "valuable papers" he was carrying around were nothing but a girl's dancing dress! For this I had raced to catch the train, for this I had ridden on a truck with a dead horse! No doubt he had lied to Dr. Thorn

about the bag, because he was afraid he would find out what really was in it.

Righteous anger drowned my heartbroken tears. With head high I wandered down to the swimming pool in the gym and prepared to go in.

"Oh, Hinpoha, come and watch me do the new back dive," called Agony. She mounted the diving platform and went off badly, striking the water with the flat of her back and making a splash like a house falling into the water. She righted herself and swam around lazily.

"Hinpoha," she said suddenly, popping her head out of the water like a devil fish, "what did you ever do with them all? I expected to get at least one."

"What did I do with what?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Chocolates, sweet cherub," said Agony, kicking the water into foam with her feet. "I sent you five pounds."

"*You* sent them?" I echoed blankly.

"Yes, dearest child, I sent them, and it took the last of my birthday check. Who did you think sent them?" And with a malicious grin she sank down under the surface of the water.

So it had been Agony who had sent the chocolates, and not Captain Bannister! I might have known—— Oh, what a fool I had been!

"What did you do with them all?" came Agony's teasing voice from the other end of the pool, where she had risen to take the air.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" I said mysteriously.

Agony looked at me gravely for a minute. "Didn't I hear Gladys putting you to bed that night and going off for hot water?" she murmured dreamily. "Seems to me I have a faint, far off recollection." She made little snorting noises, plainly in imitation of a pig, and sank below the surface again.

I was filled with a blind fury at Agony. I wanted to jump on her and choke her. I had been standing on the diving board and on the spur of the moment I went off backwards. I had only one thought in my mind; to reach Agony and duck her as she deserved. There was a great shout as I went off, followed by a round of applause.

"What is it?" I asked, coming up and blinking stupidly at the knot of watchers gathered around the pool.

"The Hawaiian dive!" they cried. "You did it perfectly. Do it again."

Agony came up out of the pool and watched enviously. For four weeks she had been practising that dive and hadn't mastered it yet. I hadn't ever hoped to learn it. And here I had done it the very first time! They made me do it again and again, and clapped until the ceiling echoed as I got the somersault in every time. It was glorious. I forgave Agony for fooling me about the Captain; I even forgave the Captain for the time being. *He* could go off and get married if he wanted to; *I* could do the Hawaiian back dive!

"How did you ever do it?" asked Agony enviously, as we dressed together, "somersault and all? Do you really think there's any chance of my ever doing it?"

"Sure, you'll do it some day," I replied out of the fullness of my wisdom,—"if you get mad enough."

Your broken-hearted,

HINPOHA.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

DEC. 28, 19—.

DEAREST AND BEST OF WINNIES:

Oh, you angels without wings, how am I ever going to thank you? How on earth did you manage to do it all? Such a Christmas present!

When I saw that array of boxes in the express office at Spencer all addressed to me I said to the agent, "There's some mistake. Those can't possibly be all mine."

"You're the only Katherine Adams in these parts, aren't you?" said the agent, eyeing that imposing pile with unconcealed curiosity.

I admitted that I was, as far as I knew.

"Then they're yours," said the agent, and mine they proved to be.

Altogether there was a wagonload.

"What on earth?" said father and Justice when I drove up to the house. "Have you gone into the trucking business?"

"Christmas presents, Father!" I shouted. "All

Christmas presents. I've got the whole of Santa Claus's load. Quick, bring me a hammer and an ax and a jimmy!"

Oh, girls, when I saw what was in those first three boxes I just sat down on the floor and wept for joy. Only the Winnebagos could have thought of sending me the House of the Open Door. There were the Indian beds and Hinpoha's bearskin and all the Navajo blankets and the pottery, just as I had seen it last in the Open Door Lodge, big as life and twice as natural. And the note from Sahwah that came along with them was a piece of Sahwah herself.

"The things are lonesome," she wrote, "and pining for someone to love them and use them. I am sending them to your new Camp Fire because I know your girls will love them as they deserve to be loved. The ghosts of all the good times we had in the House of the Open Door are hovering around the things, so anyone that gets them can't help falling under the old spell and learning how to squeeze the most fun out of every minute.

"The gymnasium apparatus is the Sandwiches' Christmas present. It was Slim's and the Captain's idea to send it out to you for your girls and boys to use.

"The House of the Open Door is being turned into Red Cross work rooms for Camp Fire Girls and we need every inch of space for the work tables. Even our beloved Lodge is Giving Service."

Gladys Evans, your father is an *angel!* He doesn't need to wait until he gets to heaven for his halo, it's visible a mile off, this minute! To think of sending me a graphophone and a hundred records! I simply can't tell you what that is going to mean to my school. I won't be able to *drive* the boys and girls away now!

And your mother! That lantern machine and the slides showing the Red Cross work and all the other splendid things is worth its weight in gold.

Oh, my dears! *Where* did you ever find time to make those twelve ceremonial dresses?

"FROM THE LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS TO THE FIRST OF THE WENONAHS. LET

BIG SISTER WINNIE SEE THAT LITTLE SISSY WEENIE IS PROPERLY CLOTHED."

I'll bet anything your friend Agony wrote that. I have a feeling that she and I are kindred spirits.

Won't my girls revel in those beads and looms, though?

BOOKS! Four whole cases of them! What on earth have you done now?

"THE WINNEBAGO LIBRARY PASSED ON BY THOSE WHO KNOW AND LOVE GOOD BOOKS TO THOSE WHO WILL SOON KNOW AND LOVE THEM"

How did you do it? Asked a hundred girls to give one book apiece? You don't mean to say that there are a hundred girls interested in us poor backwoods folks out here in Spencer? I can't believe it! Oh, we'll work and work and *work,* to prove ourselves worthy of it all!

And oh, all those little personal pretties just for me! Hinpoha, *where* did you find that darling penholder with the parrot's head on the end, and

Gladys, who told you that I broke my handglass and was pining for a white ivory one?

And even a lump of sugar for Sandhelo and a bow for Piggy's tail! I admire the artist who drew that bow.

The last box bore Nyoda's return address. What do you suppose was in it? Her chafing dish! The very one she used to have in her room, that I used to admire so much. Dear Nyoda! She knew I would rather have that than anything else.

O my dears, there never *was* such a Christmas! There never *will* be such a Christmas! Nobody ever had such friends before. If I live to be a thousand years old I'll never be able to return one-tenth of your kindness.

Yours, swimming in ecsatsy,

KATHERINE.

GLADYS TO KATHERINE

MARCH 25, 19—.

DEAREST KATHERINE:

Listen, my beloved, while I sing you a song of Migwan. She has awakened at last to find herself famous, and the rest of us, by reason of reflected glory, found ourselves looked upon as different from all other animals, and wonderfully popular and run after by five o'clock in the afternoon, like Old Man Kangaroo. And, all precepts upon precepts to the contrary, it wasn't conscientiously applying herself to her task that turned the trick, but deliberate shirking. After all, though, it was mostly a matter of chance, because if it hadn't rained so that night last October, Migwan would have gone to the library as she should have, and the world would have lost a priceless contribution to Indian lore.

It happened thusly. One of Migwan's cronies in the sophomore class has a weak throat and a condition in Indian History. On the night I have men-

tioned she trickled tearfully into Migwan's room and confided that she simply had to have an Indian legend to read in class the following day or be marked zero. She had had all the week in which to look one up in the library, but, according to immemorial custom, she had left it for the last night. Now it was raining pitchforks and she didn't dare go out, because she got a terrible attack of quinsy every time there was an east wind. Migwan, like the angel she is, promptly offered to go over and hunt one up for her.

"What kind of an Indian legend?" she inquired.

"Oh, any kind," replied Harriet carelessly, "so long as it's *Indian*. We're studying the Soul of the Savage as revealed by legend, or something like that. Slip it under my door when you come back with it. I'm going to bed and coddle my throat. Be sure you don't get one that's too long," she called back over her shoulder, "remember there are twenty in the class to help reveal the Savage Soul."

Harriet ambled placidly back to her room and Migwan began hunting through her closet for her raincoat and rubbers. She didn't find them, because she had lent them to somebody the week before and

couldn't remember whom she lent them to. She looked out of the window at the torrents coming down and decided that her little rocking chair by the lamp held out more attraction than a trip to the library. But she didn't have the heart to disappoint Harriet by not getting her an Indian legend to read in class the next day, so she sat down and manufactured one, which is as easy as rolling off a log for Migwan. Harriet would never know the difference, and neither would the teacher, off hand, and a made-up legend would save the day for Harriet as well as a genuine one. The chances were she wouldn't be called upon to read it anyway. You never are, you know, when you've broken your neck to be ready. Migwan slipped it under Harriet's door and then forgot all about it.

Several weeks later, when the *Monthly Mortarboard* came out, there was Migwan's Indian legend, big as life. It had obviously been used to fill up space and was not credited to the literary talent of the college; but to Joseph Latoka, or "Standing Pine," the Penobscot Indian who had collected the legends of his tribe into a book, which was in the college library and which was our authority on

things Indian. Migwan laughed to herself over it, but never gave away the fact that she had written it. She discovered in a roundabout way that the Literary Editor of the *Morterboard* had been in despair over lack of material when the October number was due, and told her tale of woe to Miss Percival, one of the teachers, and asked her if she had any essays fit to print. Miss Percival replied that she hadn't had a decent essay this semester, but a girl in one of her classes had brought in a rather remarkable Indian legend several days before, which might serve to cast into the breach. The *Morterboard* editor promptly hunted up Harriet and demanded the legend. Harriet still had it among her goods and chattels, and gave it to her readily, saying that it was one of Joseph Latoka's *Legends of the Penobscot Indians,* which she honestly believed to be the fact. The *Morterboard* editor took her word for it and used the legend to fill up the chinks in the October issue.

* * * * * *

It was not long after this that Very Seldom paid his annual visit to Brownell. His name really wasn't Very Seldom; it was Jeremiah Selden, but every-

body referred to him as Jerry, and it wasn't long before "Jerry Selden" became "Very Seldom." He used to be Professor of Sociology at Brownell, but he had to give up lecturing because he lost his voice. He was a sad little man with a plaintive droop to his white mustache and only a whisper of a voice. He had lost his whole family in some kind of a railroad accident and always went around with such a homeless air that everybody felt sorry for him. His hobby was Indian History, Indian Legends and Indian Relics. After he gave up teaching sociology he took to writing books, dry old essays and that sort of thing. Nobody ever read them, and he didn't make much out of them, but he kept plodding along, always hoping that he would make a hit the next time.

Once every year he came back to Brownell to spend Sunday, to keep alive the memories of his former life, he used to explain sentimentally. Miss Allison, his successor as professor of sociology, and who has him beat forty miles for teaching, always entertained him at tea on the occasion of his visit, and used to ask him stacks of questions, jollying him along and making him believe she was in doubt about a lot of things she knew better than he did.

Having his opinion consulted that way made him feel quite cheerful and important, and his visit to Brownell always put new life into him.

It happened that one Sunday afternoon Migwan went to Miss Allison's room to ask her about something and ran into Very Seldom paying his annual visit. Miss Allison herself wasn't there. She had been called out of town the night before and had turned over the job of entertaining Very Seldom to her room-mate, Miss Lee. Miss Lee taught mathematics and didn't care a rap about sociology, and still less about Indians. Miss Lee is very fond of Migwan, and invited her to stay to tea. Migwan is forever getting asked to tea by the faculty; it's because she always gets her hair parted so straight in the middle, and never upsets her teacup.

Migwan had heard about Very Seldom, and was just as anxious to help cheer him up as anybody, but this time he didn't need any cheering. He was positively radiant. He was talking about his latest book and was nearly bursting with enthusiasm.

It seems that all his life he had been having an argument with another Indian History shark as to whether, before the coming of the white man to this

continent, the eastern Indians had ever lived on, or visited the western plains. He maintained that they had, while his friend insisted that they hadn't. Just recently he had read, in a magazine published by the Indian Society of North America, a hitherto unpublished legend of Joseph Latoka's, a curious legend of the White Buffalo. To his mind this proved beyond a doubt that the Penobscot Indians had, at some time or other, lived on or visited the Great Plains, and had seen the Buffalo. It was the only Penobscot legend that mentioned the buffalo as an object of worship. He had immediately written a monograph on the subject which was even then in the hands of the publisher. It was a great point to have discovered. Fame would come to him at last. Very Seldom's air of desolation had vanished; his hour of triumph had come.

It was at this point that Migwan, the expert tea drinker, suddenly upset her cup all over Miss Allison's cherished Mexican drawnwork lunchcloth. That foolish legend that she had manufactured to save herself a trip to the library in the rain had been taken as authentic and had been copied from the *Morterboard* into other magazines! At the time

she wrote it she was in too much of a hurry to pay attention to any such trifles as the difference between Eastern and Plains Indians. Anyway, she hadn't *said* anywhere that they were Penobscot Indians, it was Harriet who had said so to the *Morterboard* editor.

Several times during the evening she tried to tell poor Very Seldom that the Legend of the White Buffalo, which proved his point so conclusively, was not a legend at all, but her own composition, but each time the words choked her. The little ex-Professor's satisfaction was so great and his happiness so supreme that she didn't have the heart to blot it out. The secret was hers. Everybody in college believed that legend to have come from the collection of Joseph Latoka. All the evening she debated with herself whether or not she should tell, or let the fake legend go down on record. In the end the professor's happiness won the day and she decided not to mar his almost childish glee in his discovery.

"What does it matter, after all?" she thought. "About three-fourths of the things that are written about Indians aren't true. Nobody will read his old

monograph anyway, so no harm will be done. If it gives him so much pleasure to think he's discovered something, why spoil it all?" The whole matter seemed so trivial to Migwan that it wasn't worth fussing about. Just what difference did it make to the world, especially at this time, whether the eastern Indians of the United States had ever visited the western plains or not? It seemed about as important as whether the Fourth Emperor of the Ming Dynasty had carrots for dinner or parsnips. So she went home without revealing the origin of the Legend of the White Buffalo.

She thought the incident was decently interred, and had forgotten all about it, when—pop! out came Jack-in-the-box once more. Along in March came the celebrated lecturer on Indian costumes, Dr. Burnett. Handbills announcing his lecture were distributed all over town a week before his coming. The public was to be admitted and half the proceeds were to go to the library fund. Migwan picked up one of the handbills and glanced casually at the subject of the lecture. Then her hair nearly turned green. It was "The Legend of the White Buffalo," based on the book of the late Professor Jeremiah Selden!

The first fact that struck Migwan was that Very Seldom was dead, which came as a shock of surprise. Poor Very Seldom! He had found a home at last. But before he went he had had his inning and had died happy that he had contributed an important link to the chains of Indian History.

Then Migwan realized what a horrible mess she had started by writing that legend and keeping still about it. If anybody ever found out about it now, Dr. Burnett's reputation would be ruined.

An hour before the lecture was to begin found Migwan sitting in the parlor of the hotel waiting for Dr. Burnett to come down in answer to the note she sent up with a bellboy. He came presently, a long-haired, Van Dyke-y sort of man, who smiled genially at her and inquired affably what he could do for the charming miss.

"If you please," said Migwan breathlessly, "could you give some other lecture just as well?"

"Could I give some other lecture just as well?" repeated Dr. Burnett in perplexity.

"Yes," Migwan went on desperately, trying to get it over with quickly, "could you? You see, the Legend of the White Buffalo isn't a legend at all."

"The Legend of the White Buffalo *isn't* a leg-

end!" repeated Dr. Burnett again, looking at Migwan as if he thought she was not in her right mind. "Pray, what is it?"

"It's—it's a fake," said Migwan.

"A fake!" exclaimed Dr. Burnett, in astonishment. "And how do you know it is a fake?"

"Because I wrote it myself," said Migwan, trying to break the news as gently as possible, "because it was simply pouring, and Harriet had a sore throat."

"You wrote it yourself because it was simply pouring and Harriet had a sore throat?" repeated Dr. Burnett, now acting as if he were sure she was out of her mind.

Then Migwan explained.

"But, my dear," said Dr. Burnett, "you *couldn't* have written that legend. No white man could have invented it. It is the very breath and spirit of the Indian. In it the Soul of the Savage stands revealed."

"But I *did*," insisted Migwan, and finally succeeded in convincing him that she was telling the truth.

Dr. Burnett usually spent from one to three months preparing a new lecture. He prepared one

that night in an hour that knocked the shine out of all his previous ones. His speech entitled, "What Chance Has a Man When a Woman Takes a Hand" brought down the house. He told the story of the fake legend, and the audience was alternately laughing at the neat way Migwan had taken everybody in and weeping at the way she wouldn't spoil poor Very Seldom's pleasure.

Migwan was the heroine of the hour. The whole college sought her acquaintance forthwith. Of course, they found out all about the Winnebagos, and how Migwan came to know so much about Indian lore, and Hinpoha and I, being Winnebagos, too, came in for our share of the glory. Our humble apartment is filled to overflowing all day long with girls who want to make Migwan's acquaintance and casually drop in on us in the hope of meeting her in our chamber. It is great to be fellow-Winnebago with a celebrity.

But I haven't told you all yet. The day after the lecture Dr. Burnett had a solemn conference with that portion of the English Department which was so fortunate to have Migwan in its classes, after which Migwan was called in. She went with a kind of scary feeling because she thought Dr. Burnett

might be going to have her arrested for perpetrating the fake, but instead of that she was informed that she showed such budding talent in composition and had such a positive genius for portraying the soul of the Indian that he wanted her to work with him in his research work after she graduated from college. She is to make a grand tour with him among the real Indians on the reservations and get them to tell tales of the old days as they remember them from the legends of their fathers and then she is to write them down to be published in a book.

Just imagine it! There is Migwan's future all cut out for her with a cookie cutter, all because she was too lazy to go across the campus in the rain and get a real legend for a sick friend. Isn't life queer?

Famously yours.

GLADYS.

P. S. O Katherine, *mon amie,* why aren't you here? But from the tone of your last letters it seems that you have become reconciled to your lonely lot. So the "mysterious him" that came to you from out the Vast is teaching you French and History and reading Literature with you! Katherine Adams, you sly puss, you'll be better educated yet than we!

SAHWAH TO KATHERINE

APRIL 4, 19—.

DEAREST K:

You don't need to think you're the only one having adventures with your work. Your little old Sahwah is a sure enough grown up young lady now, a real wage-earner, making her little track along the Open Road, and frequently stepping into mud holes and falling flat on her face. I'm "Miss Brewster" now, in a tailored suit and plain shirtwaist, ready to conquer the world with a notebook and typewriter. I finished my course at the business college early in February, and one day while I was in the last stages of completion as a stenographer and nearly ready to have a shipping tag pasted on me in the shape of a graduation certificate, I was summoned into the private office of Mr. Barrett, the head of the school.

I had a chill when the office girl brought me the message. There were only two or three things you were ever sent to Mr. Barrett for. One was failure

to pay your tuition; another was doing so poorly in your work that you were a disgrace instead of a credit to the school; another was for "skipping school." A number of the girls were in the habit of cutting classes after lunch several days in the week and either going to the matinee or running around town with boys from the school. Many complaints about this had come to Mr. Barrett from the teachers, until he got so that he sent for everyone who skipped and read them a stiff lecture. He is a very stern, austere man, and the whole school stands in dread of him.

I went over my list of sins when I was summoned to the office. My tuition was paid up until the end; there was no trouble there. It wouldn't be my lessons either; for, while I was far from being the eighth wonder of the world on the typewriter, I still had managed to stay in the "A" division since the first. But—here my hair began to stand on end—I had "skipped school" the afternoon before. Slim had come home from college to attend the funeral of his grandfather, and had called me up and invited me to go automobiling with him while he was waiting for his train to go back, and

you can guess what happened to Duty. I just naturally skipped school and went with him. It was the first and only time I had skipped in my whole career, but I was evidently going to get my trimmings for it. I went into the office with a sinking heart, for up until this time I had managed to keep in Mr. Barret's good graces, and I did pride myself quite a bit on my unreproved state. But I made up my mind to take it like a good sport—I had danced and now I would pay the piper.

Having gone into the office in such a state of mind, I wasn't prepared for the shock when Mr. Barrett looked up from his desk and greeted me with a (for him) extremely amiable smile.

"Sit down, Miss Brewster," he said pleasantly, pulling up a chair for me beside his own.

I sat down. It was time, for my knees were giving away under me.

"Miss Brewster," Mr. Barrett began affably, "I have here"—and he picked up a paper on which he had made some notations—"a call for a stenographer which is a little out of the ordinary line." He paused to let that sink in.

"Yes, sir," I murmured respectfully. My heart

began to beat freely again. He wasn't going to lecture me about skipping school!

"Mrs. Osgood Harper," continued Mr. Barrett crisply, "telephoned me this morning personally, and asked if I had a young lady whom I could send her every day from nine until one to attend to her personal correspondence. She is very particular about the kind of person she wants; it must be someone who is refined and educated, as well as a good stenographer, for a good deal of her work will be social correspondence. She also intimated that the girl must be—er, reasonably good looking."

He paused a second time and again I said meekly, "Yes, sir." There didn't seem to be anything else to say.

"I have carefully considered all the girls in the finishing class," continued Mr. Barrett, "and you seem to be the only one I could consider for the position. I know Mrs. Harper and know that in some ways she will be hard to work for. But the pay she offers is generous; better than you could do as a beginner in a commercial house, and the hours are excellent, nine to one, leaving your afternoons free. Besides that, there will be the advantage to

yourself of coming in contact with such people as the Harpers, and the pleasure of working in such beautiful surroundings. You are a girl who will appreciate such things. You know who the Harpers are, of course?"

I had never heard of them, but I was quite willing to be enlightened. The Harpers, it seemed, were in the first boatload of settlers that landed on our town site; they had since accumulated such a fortune that it made Pike's Peak look like an ant hill; and no matter what string Mrs. Harper harped on, people were sure to sit still and listen. Now she desired a personal stenographer of maidenly form, and I, Sahwah the Sunfish, had been measured by the awe-inspiring Mr. Barrett and found fit.

My feelings as I came out of the office were far different from those with which I went in. I entered with a guilty droop; I came out with my head in the air. I hadn't dreamed of getting such a position to start with. I had pictured myself as beginning at the bottom in some big office and slowly working to the top. But to begin my career by doing the private work of Mrs. Osgood Harper! It seemed like some fairy tale. I tried to think of

something to say to Mr. Barrett to thank him for having recommended me for the position, but the shock had sent my wits skylarking, and the only thing that came into my head was that song that we used to sing:

"Out of a city of six million people, why did you pick upon me?"

and that, of course, was impossible as a noble sentiment.

The next morning I set out on my Joyous Venture. The Osgood Harpers lived on the Heights in a great colonial house set up high on a hill and approached by long, winding walks. It was more than a mile from the street-car, but I enjoyed the walk through those beautiful estates. I couldn't have served a tennis ball in any direction without hitting a millionaire.

Mrs. Harper was a stout and tremendously impressive lady about forty years old. She had steely blue eyes that looked right through me until I began to have horrible fears that there was something wrong with my appearance and she would presently

say that I would not do at all. But she didn't; all she said was, "So you are Miss Brewster, are you?" and motioned me to sit down at a writing table.

She had received me in a cozy little sitting room which opened out of her bedroom, and it seemed that this was to be my office. She started right in to lay out my work for me and I didn't have much time to look around at the beautiful furnishings. The work was far different from anything we had had in school, but very interesting, and I took to it from the start. Mrs. Harper is chairman of countless committees, and secretary of several societies, and there were quantities of notices to send out to committee members, and letters to write to business men soliciting subscriptions to various funds and things like that, all to be written on heavy linen paper of finest quality, bearing the Harper monogram in embossed gold in the upper left-hand corner.

I worked away with a will and the morning hours flew. I would have worked right on past one o'clock without knowing it if there hadn't been an interruption. Shortly after noon the door opened and a girl of about seventeen walked in. She was ex-

tremely pretty; that is, at first glance she was. She was very fair, with bright pink cheeks and big blue eyes. Her yellow hair was plastered down over her forehead in an exaggerated style, and monstrous pearl earrings dangled from her ears. She had evidently just come in from outdoors, for she wore an all mink coat and held a mink cap in her hand. Without a glance in my direction she began chatting to Mrs. Harper in a thin, nasal, high-pitched voice. I dropped my eyes and went on with my work. In a minute I could feel her staring at me.

"Ethel," said Mrs. Harper, as soon as she could get the floor, "this is Miss Brewster, my stenographer. Miss Brewster, my daughter Ethel."

I acknowledged the introduction pleasantly; Miss Ethel favored me with another stare, murmured something in an indistinct tone and then immediately turned her back on me and went on talking to her mother. Right then and there my admiration for the "first families" got a setback; I didn't admire Ethel Harper's manners, not a little bit. She had "snob" written all over her features. I could see that she classed me with the servants and as such she didn't trouble herself to be polite to me.

"A lot there is to be gained by associating with *her*," I said to myself. "I'll be just as cool and dignified as possible when *she's* around. She won't get another chance to snub me."

But in spite of her I was enthusiastic about the position and could hardly wait until I got there the next day. Mrs. Harper went out shortly after I arrived and I worked alone. Ethel Harper came home from school at noon and went through the room on the way to her mother's, but I rattled away on the typewriter and never looked up. She came out soon and went into her own room, which was on the other side. In about fifteen minutes I heard her call me.

"Miss Brewster!" I stopped typing.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Come here," she called, and her voice sounded impatient.

I stepped across the hall into her room. She was standing in front of the mirror putting on a ruffled taffeta dress, which she was struggling to adjust.

"Hook me up!" she commanded, without the formality of saying "Please."

I had it on the end of my tongue to tell her that

I was a stenographer, not a lady's maid, but I remembered "Give Service" in time, and hooked her up without a word. She never even said "Thank you!" She just sat down at her dressing table and began pencilling her eyebrows. Evidently it must have been the maid's day out, for she called me in again later to pin her collar.

"Have I got too much color on my face?" she asked languidly, dabbing away at her cheeks with some red stuff out of a box in front of her. Then she put carmine on her lips, a sort of whitewash on her nose and forehead and finished it with some pencilled shadows under her eyes. All I could think of was Eeny-Meeny, the time we gave her that coat of war paint.

"What's that?" asked milady while I was fastening her collar, poking her finger at my Torch Bearer's pin.

"It's a Camp Fire pin," I replied.

"What's Camp Fire?" she demanded idly.

I explained briefly what Camp Fire was.

"Gee," said Ethel elegantly, "none of that for mine!" And she picked up her eyebrow pencil again and did a little more frescoing.

I went back to my work in disgust. I was so disappointed in Ethel Harper. I had expected that the daughter of such a fine family would be a real lady in every sense of the word—cultured, genuine, thoroughbred; and she had turned out to be nothing but a cheap imitation—slangy, ill-bred, snobbish, overdressed and made up like an actress. Beyond her pretty, baby doll face there was nothing to her. There wasn't an ounce of brains in her poor flat head.

And yet, she was tremendously popular in her own snobbish set, as I could gather from conversations around me, and by the invitations she was constantly receiving to festivities. Although she was not formally out in society, I knew that she went out to dances with men very often, when her mother thought that she was spending the night with girl friends. I found that out from telephone conversations Ethel carried on when her mother was out of the way. It was plain to be seen that Ethel had only one ambition in the world, and that was to have a good time, regardless of how she got it.

It wasn't any of my business, of course, but I couldn't help wondering what Mrs. Harper would

do if she knew about some of Ethel's little excursions. Mrs. Harper had a flinty sort of nature and you only had to look into those cold eyes of hers to know that it would go hard with anyone who had displeased her. One morning I had a good chance to see her when she was roused. A Cloisonné locket belonging to Mrs. Harper had disappeared from her jewel box and she had accused her maid, Clarice, of taking it. Clarice, frightened out of her wits, was tearfully protesting her innocence, but Mrs. Harper towered over her like a fury, threatening to hand her over to the police. Ethel, sitting in a rocking chair polishing her finger nails, listened indifferently. I felt embarrassed to witness this painful scene and stood irresolute, unable to decide whether to go out or stay, when Mrs. Harper turned to me and said, "Make out a check for Clarice's wages for the month and deduct twenty-five dollars from it, the value of the locket she stole. Then insert an advertisement in the papers for a new maid."

Clarice, with a fresh burst of grief, declared again that she knew nothing about the locket, and begged not to be sent away with a black character, because she had a paralyzed sister to support, but Mrs. Har-

per was unmoved. Out went Clarice, bag and baggage, crying as she went and still declaring her innocence.

"These maids will steal you blind, if you give them a chance," said Mrs. Harper, still bristling with anger.

"I never did like Clarice," remarked Ethel with a yawn.

The next day Mrs. Harper went out during the morning and Ethel called me to help her pack her visiting bag. She was going to spend the week-end with a girl friend. No new maid had come to take Clarice's place as yet, so Ethel took advantage of my not having much work to do for her mother that morning to press me into service.

"I can't find my wrist watch," she said as I came in. "I don't know whether I put it in the bag or not, and I haven't time to look. Will you look through the bag while I finish dressing?"

I pawed carefully through the bag, and brought to light, not the wrist watch, but the Cloisonné locket, which Mrs. Harper had accused Clarice of taking.

"Why, Ethel," I said delightedly, "here is your

mother's locket! Clarice didn't steal it after all. It was down in your bag."

"I know it was," said Ethel coolly. "I put it there."

"*You* put it there?" I echoed. "Did you find it, then?"

Ethel laughed disagreeably. "I had it all the while," she said. "I'm going to a dance to-night that mamma doesn't know anything about, and I've set my heart on wearing that locket. Mamma will never let me wear it; it was brought to her from Paris by an old friend that's dead now, and she's afraid I'll lose it. So I just took it out of her jewel box the other day and made her believe Clarice took it."

"Ethel!" I exclaimed in horror. "How could you? How could you sit there and hear your mother accuse poor Clarice of taking it?"

Ethel shrugged her shoulders. "I never did like Clarice," she said. "She was an impertinent piece. It served her right. Put the locket back in the bag. I've got to start in a minute."

But I didn't budge. I stood looking at her until she looked the other way. With all her millions

and all her fine connections, I despised Ethel Harper as if she had been a crawling worm. I didn't want to get mixed up in anything that wasn't my business, but I had no intention of letting poor Clarice remain under a cloud.

"I'm not going to put it back in the bag," I replied firmly. "I'm going to take it right back to your mother when she comes home. She must know that it isn't stolen so she can make things right with Clarice."

"Don't you dare tell mamma," said Ethel furiously. "She'll kill me if she knows I've got it. Give it to me, I say." She tried to snatch it out of my hand, but I kept hold of it. "Give it to me, you impertinent little stenographer, you!" she shrieked.

It was getting disgraceful. I tried to save a shred of dignity. I laid the locket on the dresser and faced Ethel steadily. I still had a vivid memory of Clarice's distressed face as she went out that day.

"You have done Clarice a wrong," I said firmly, "and it must be righted. I'll give you your choice. Either you take the locket back to your mother or I'll tell her where it is."

Ethel changed her tactics and tried to bribe me. "I'll give you a dozen pairs of silk stockings if you don't say anything to mamma about it and let her go on thinking it's stolen, so I can wear it whenever I please," she offered.

I longed to choke her. "Don't you try to bribe me, Ethel Harper," I said severely. "I've got a code of honor, even if I am a poor stenographer, which is more than you have, with all your millions."

"Some more of your Campfire stuff," she said sneeringly.

"You bet it is 'Campfire stuff,'" I replied hotly. "You see that little pin? One of things it says is 'Be trustworthy.' If I let Clarice be unjustly accused I wouldn't be worthy of that pin. Remember! Either you tell your mother or I do." And I started for the door.

Ethel changed her tune again and began to cry. "Everybody is so horrid to me," she sobbed. "Mamma will never let me go anywhere I want to go or wear what I want to wear, and the servants won't do what I tell them. Even my mother's stenographer bosses me around! I wish I was dead!"

But I was firm in my championship of Clarice. "You'll have to tell," I repeated. "I see your mother coming in now."

Ethel began to look frightened. "I'll not tell her I took it, she'd kill me," she whined. "I'll tell her I just found it and she can take back what she said to Clarice."

I looked her steadily in the eyes. She flushed and looked down.

"I suppose you'll go and tell anyway, you old tattletale," she said savagely. "I'll get even with you for this, see if I don't!" She ran out of the room and I didn't see her again for several days.

However, I knew the locket had gone back where it belonged, because Mrs. Harper had me send Clarice a check for twenty-five dollars, with the brief statement that the locket had been found. Right there was where I lost some of my regard for Mrs. Harper. She never apologized to Clarice for accusing her wrongfully; never offered to do anything to make it up to her. She just sent that cold little note and the check. A real thoroughbred would have acknowledged herself to be in the wrong, but Mrs. Harper couldn't bring herself to

apologize to a servant. The affair blew over and I never heard Clarice mentioned again.

I grew to like my work more and more as the days went by, and gradually learned to handle quite a bit of it myself. Mrs. Harper was very busy; she did a great deal of Red Cross and other war work, besides keeping up in all her clubs, and she got into the habit of telling me what to say to people and letting me write the letters myself. Early in March she went out of town to a convention and left me with a great many letters to write to various people, telling me to sign her name for her. I took very great pains with all those letters so as to be sure to say the right things to the right people, and I felt satisfied when the week was out that I had done myself credit.

Accordingly, it struck me like a thunderbolt when, several days after her return, Mrs. Harper came to me, blazing with anger, and demanded to know what I meant by writing such letters in her absence. Startled, I asked her what she referred to.

"You wrote Mr. Samuel Butler that if he didn't hurry and pay up his subscription to the Red Cross Mr. Harper would pay it for him and take it out

of his next bill," said Mrs. Harper furiously. "Mr. Butler is insulted and has withdrawn his subscription of ten thousand dollars to the Perkins Settlement House, which I am trying so hard to establish. Whatever possessed you to write such a letter?"

"I never wrote a letter like that," I replied with spirit. "I wrote Mr. Butler a very polite, respectful reminder that his pledge was due this month; I never mentioned Mr. Harper or anything about paying it and taking the amount out of any bill."

I was completely at sea.

"You *did* write that letter!" declared Mrs. Harper angrily. "How dare you deny it? Mr. Butler showed it to me. It was written on this very stationery, on this typewriter with the green ribbon, and signed with my name in the way you sign it. You wrote it to be funny, I suppose. Well, I can tell you that I can't have anything like that. I won't have any further need for your services."

She was so positive I had written it that I began to have an awful feeling that I might have written it in my sleep. You know what strange things I do in my sleep sometimes. But all the while I knew who had done it. Ethel Harper had sworn to get

even with me for making her tell her mother about the locket. She had written that letter in place of the one I had written. I remembered that one day while Mrs. Harper was away I had been called downstairs and kept talking for over an hour to one of Mrs. Harper's committee members who had undertaken to distribute some literature and came for instructions. During that time Ethel would have had plenty of chance to read through my mail upstairs.

I started to tell Mrs. Harper that I suspected someone else of writing it, intending to lead gently up to the subject of Ethel, but Mrs. Harper scoffed at the idea.

"There isn't anyone else in the house who can run the typewriter," she said flatly.

This was untrue. Ethel could run it; she had done so several times when I was there. But what was the use of accusing Ethel when her mother wouldn't believe it anyway? I realized the hopelessness of trying to convince Mrs. Harper of something she didn't want to believe.

"And further," continued Mrs. Harper, "I have found that you have not been attending strictly to

business. Ethel tells me that you often go over to her room when she is there and stand and talk to her instead of giving your time to my work."

"Little snake-in-the-grass!" I thought vengefully. I had never gone to her room unless she had called me to do something.

I made up my mind I wouldn't stay there another minute. I didn't have to work for such people. I drew myself up stiffly. "If you believe such things, Mrs. Harper," I said icily, "there can be no business relations between us. I shall not even take the trouble to prove the truth about that letter. I shall go immediaely." And go I did. I knew Mr. Barrett would be very much put out over the affair, because he seemed to think Mrs. Harper had done his school an honor by hiring one of his pupils, but what was I to do? Stay there and be the scapegoat for all Ethel's sins. Not while I had feet to walk away on.

As I went down the steps I met Ethel coming up. She looked at me with a meaning expression and a triumphant smile. She had kept her word and gotten even with me.

I felt badly over it, of course, for who can lose

a good position and not be cut up about it? I suppose I must have looked pretty doleful for a couple of days, because I met Mrs. Anderson, that friend of Nyoda's, who used to lend us so many "props" for our Winnebago performances, on the street and she asked me right away what was the matter.

"You're lonesome for those friends of yours," she went on, without giving me a chance to answer. "I'm lonesome, too," she went on. "My husband has been in Washington all winter. Come out and spend a few days with me. You used to be pretty good company, if I remember rightly."

She persuaded me and I went. You remember the Anderson place out on the East Shore, don't you? We were all out there once last year. Perfect duck of a house all made of soft gray shingles and seven acres of garden and woods around it. I tramped all over the place through the March mud, looking for signs of spring, and had a perfectly glorious time.

"There's one sign of spring, over there," said Mrs. Anderson, who was with me on one of my tramps.

"Where?" I asked, looking around.

"Young man's fancy," said Mrs. Anderson with a laugh of tolerant amusement, "lightly turning to thoughts of love. Look up on the barn there."

I looked where she pointed, and saw a boy of about eighteen standing on the roof of the barn gazing off into space through a field glass. He had a white flag tied to his right wrist, which he was waving over his head, like the soldiers do when they signal.

"Who is he and what is he doing?" I asked.

"That's Peter, the boy who helps around the stable," replied Mrs. Anderson. "He's sending messages to his lady love. A certain combination of flourishes means 'I love you,' and another means 'Meet me to-night,' and so on. He told John, my chauffeur, about it, and John told me."

"How silly!" said I, with a laugh for poor love-sick Peter. "Who is the object of his affection?"

"Some servant girl from the next estate," replied Mrs. Anderson. "They carry on their affair through field glasses and with signals. They think they are having a thrilling romance."

"Disgusting!" said I. "How could any girl make such a fool of herself where everybody can see her!"

Mrs. Anderson laughed indulgently, but I could feel her scorn underneath it. "Some girls will sell every scrap of dignity they have for what they consider a good time, my dear," she said, laying her hand on my arm in a motherly way.

We left Romeo on the barn flourishing out his messages in the late March sunshine and wandered over to the next estate. There was a new litter of prize bull pups over there and Mrs. Anderson had promised that I should see them before I went home. A creek divided the two estates, which we crossed on a little foot bridge. The path led along beside the creek for a while until the little stream widened out into a beautiful pond, big enough for boating. A pier had been built at one side of the pond, running out into the water. Someone was standing out on the end of the pier, and as we came up we saw that we had discovered the other half of the romance. A girl, with a field glass held to her eyes and a white flag tied around her right wrist, was signalling in the direction of the Anderson barn, the roof of which was visible in the distance, beyond Mrs. Anderson's apple orchard.

Something about the girl was familiar, even in the

distance, and as we came near I recognized the mink coat that I had seen many times lately. There was no doubt about it. The girl on the end of the pier was Ethel Harper. I stood still, too much disgusted to speak. Ethel Harper, the daughter of one of the "first" families, with the best social position in the city, her mother prominent in all great uplift movements, carrying on a vulgar flirtation with Mrs. Anderson's stable boy! So this was the great romance she had been hinting about at various times! Randall—that was the name of the girl she was intimate with; this was the Randall place. She had been coming here so often for the sake of the boy next door. Did she know he was an ignorant servant? I doubted it. Anything in men's clothes set her silly head awhirl. I wished her haughty mother could have seen her then.

Mrs. Anderson suddenly laughed out loud and at that Ethel turned around and saw us. She gave a great start as she recognized me, took a step backward and fell off the end of the pier into the pond, disappearing with a shriek into the deep water.

I slipped out of my coat, threw off my shoes and went in after her. The water was so icy I could

hardly swim at first. When I did get hold of her it was a battle royal to get her back to the pier. She was so weighted down by the fur coat and she struggled so fiercely that several times I thought we were both going down. Mrs. Anderson threw us a plank and with its help I finally got her to the pier.

"Now run for your life!" I ordered, my own teeth chattering in my head. "Drop that wet coat and I'll race you to the house." She didn't move nearly fast enough to avoid a chill and I took hold of her hand and pulled her along.

Up in a cosy bedroom in the Randall's house we sat up, some hours later, wrapped in blankets, and looked at each other gravely. Mrs. Anderson had been in and talked with Ethel like a big sister about the cheapness of carrying on flirtations with strange boys. Ethel had seen her little affair in its true light, robbed of all romance, and shame had taken hold of her. Mrs. Anderson explained how the gallant Romeo had seen his Juliet fall into the pond and had fled basely in the other direction for fear he would be blamed, making no effort to rescue her, and she might have been drowned if I hadn't fished her out.

Ethel had been frightened out of her wits when she fell into the water; she was still suffering from the shock. She flushed hotly as she caught my glance, and cast down her eyes.

"Thank you, Miss Brewster, for saving my life," she said rather shame-facedly. Then she went on in a low tone, "I want to tell you something. I wrote that letter to Mr. Butler,—the one that made mamma so angry."

"I know," I answered gravely.

"You knew, and you jumped into the water after me anyway?" she said in a tone of unbelief. "Why, you might have let me drown as easy as not."

"O no, I mightn't," I answered. "That isn't the way a Camp Fire Girl gets even."

Ethel was silent a long while. Then she said, "Will you come back to our house after I have told mother the whole thing? She misses you a lot, says she never had anyone do her work so well as you did it, and she has been in a terrible temper ever since you left."

"I don't know," I answered slowly. I had been very deeply hurt and my foolish pride was still on its hind legs.

"Will you please come?" pleaded Ethel, slipping

out of her chair and putting her arms around me. "We can have such good times after your work hours. Please, for my sake, I want you. You're the most wonderful girl I've ever met!"

Old Mr. Pride and I had a final round and we came out with me sitting on his head. "I'll come back," I said, slipping my arm around Ethel.

So you see, Katherine, adventure isn't dead, not by any means, even if you do have to take it along with your bread and butter.

Loads of love from your stenographic friend, Sadie Shorthander, once upon a time your

SAHWAH.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

April 8, 19—.

Dearest Winnies:

Daggers and dirks! Did I say it was dull out here? Deluded mortal! For the past week it's been so strenuous that I have seriously considered moving to Bedlam for a rest. If I'm not gray by the time I'm thirty it'll be because I'm bald.

As Mistress of Ceremonies your humble servant is a rather watery success. You know from sad experience my fatal fondness for trying new and startling experiments and also my genius for leaving the most important things undone. Remember the time I was Lemonade Committee when we climbed Windy Hill and I carefully provided water and sugar and spoons and glasses, and no lemons? And the time I hid the unwashed dishes in the oven at Aunt Anna's and then went home with Gladys and forgot all about them, and Aunt Anna nearly had spasms because she thought her silverware had been stolen? And the time we went to Ellen's Isle

and I mislaid the vital portion of my traveling suit half an hour before the train started and had to go in a borrowed suit that didn't fit? Every time little Katherine was given something to do she either forgot to do it altogether, or else did it in such a way as to make herself ridiculous.

The memory of all those things rose up and oppressed me after I had undertaken to stage a Patriotic Pageant for the township of Spencer. I was so afraid I would do something that would turn it into a farce that I began to have nightmares the minute I sank to weary slumber. It was a daring idea, this patriotic pageant. Since history began there had never been a pageant, patriotic or otherwise, in this section. Most of the folks had never seen a circus, or a show, or a parade; so there was nobody to give me any help except Justice. I myself would never have thought of tackling it, but no sooner had my Camp Fire Girls gotten absorbed in Red Cross work, and been thrilled by reading accounts of what Camp Fire Girls were doing in other sections, than they begged me to get up a pageant. I had my misgivings, but, being a Winnebago, I couldn't back out. A pageant it should be, if it

cost my head. (It pretty nearly did, but not in the way I had feared.)

Justice Sherman hailed the plan with delight.

"Go to it," he encouraged. "I'm with you to the bitter end. I've never done it before but I'll never begin any younger.

"There is a tide in the affairs of schoolma'ams,
That, taken at the flood, leads on to Pageants."

"Lead on MacDuff! Trot out the order of events."

At Justice's suggestion I summed up all the possibilities.

"There isn't much to work with," I said thoughtfully, having counted up all my assets on the fingers of one hand. "Just ten Camp Fire Girls, about as many boys, one trick mule, and—you."

"So glad I know, right at the outset, just where I come in," said Justice politely, "after the mule."

"Sandhelo's got his red, white and blue pompom that the girls sent him for Christmas," I went on, ignoring Justice's gibe. "We could make red, white and blue harness for him, too."

"If only he doesn't get temperamental!" said Justice fervently.

"The girls could wear their Red Cross caps and aprons in one part of it," I continued, "and flags draped on them when they act out 'The Spirit of Columbia.' One of the girls can wear her Ceremonial gown and be the Spirit of Nature that comes to tell the others the secret of the soil that will help them win the war. Oh, ideas are coming to me faster than flies to molasses."

"Would you advise me to wear my Ceremonial gown or my Red Cross apron and cap?" asked Justice soberly. "I could braid my hair in two pigtails——"

"Oh, Justice!" I interrupted, "if you only had a soldier's uniform!" Then, as I saw Justice wince and the laughter die out of his eyes, I stopped abruptly and changed the subject. It was an awfully sore point with him that he had been rejected for the army.

"We'll have a flag raising, of course, and tableaux," I rushed on. "Would you put the flag on the schoolhouse, or set up a pole in the ground?"

"I think on the schoolhouse," said Justice, with a return of interest. "That's where it belongs."

Justice and I held more conferences in the next

day or so than the King and his Prime Minister. Lessons in the little schoolhouse were abandoned while we drilled and rehearsed for the pageant. Justice and I put together and bought the flag.

"Who's going to raise it?" asked Justice, shaking the beautiful bright starry folds out of the package.

I considered.

"I think the pupil that has the best record in school should raise it," suggested Justice.

"I think," I said slowly, "I'll let Absalom Butts raise it."

"Absalom Butts!" exclaimed Justice incredulously. "The laziest, meanest, most mischievous boy in school! I wouldn't let him be in the pageant, if I had my way, let alone raise the flag."

"Exactly," I said calmly. "You're just like the rest of them. That's the whole trouble with Absalom Butts. He's been used to harsh measures all his life. His father has cuffed him about ever since he can remember. Everybody considers him a bad boy and a terror to snakes and all that and now he acts the part thoroughly. He's so homely that nobody will ever be attracted to him by his looks, and such a poor scholar that he will never

make a name for himself at his lessons, and the only way he can make himself prominent is through his pranks. He's too old to be in school with the rest of the children; he should be with boys of his own age. His father makes him stay there because he is too obstinate to admit that he will never get out by the graduation route, and Absalom takes out his spite on the teacher. I can read him like a book. I've tried fighting him to a finish on every point and it hasn't worked. He's still ready to break out at a moment's notice. Now I'm going to change my tactics. I'm going to appoint him, as the oldest pupil, to be my special aid in the pageant, and help work out the details. I'm going to honor him by letting him raise the flag. We'll see how that will change his mind about playing pranks to spoil the pageant."

"It won't work," said Justice gloomily. "Absalom Butts is Absalom Butts, the son of Elijah Butts; and a chip off the old block. The old man has a mean, crafty disposition, and he probably was just like Absalom when he was young. Absalom is going to do something to spoil that pageant, I see it in his eye. You watch."

"It's worth trying, anyhow," I said determinedly.

"It won't work," reiterated Justice. "You can't change human nature."

"It worked once," I said, and I told him about the Dalrymple twins, Antha and Anthony, last summer on Ellen's Isle.

"So you turned little Cry-baby into a lion of bravery and Sir Boastful into a modest violet!" said Justice, in a tone of incredulity.

"Yes, and if you'd ever seen them at the beginning of the summer you wouldn't have held any high hopes of changing human nature, either," I remarked, a little nettled at Justice's tone.

Justice started to reply, but was seized with a violent fit of coughing that left him leaning weakly against the door. I looked at him in some alarm. I knew it was throat trouble that had kept him out of the army, but it hadn't seemed to be anything to worry about—just a dry, hacking cough from time to time. Now, standing out there in the brilliant sunshine, he looked very white and haggard.

"You're all tired out, you've been working too

hard," I said, remembering how he had been putting in time after school hours working in Elijah Butts' cotton storehouse, because it was impossible to get enough men to handle the cotton. Then, by drilling my boys and girls by the hour in military marching and running countless errands for me—poor Justice was in danger of being sacrificed on the altar of my ambition.

"I'm a selfish thing!" I said vehemently.

"Nonsense!" said Justice, holding up his head and beginning to fold up the flag. "I got choked with dust, that's all." Manlike, he hated to display any sign of physical weakness before a girl. I decided to say no more about it, but I knew he needed rest.

"Sit down a minute," I said artfully, sinking down on the doorsill, "and keep me 'mused. I'm tired to death. Tell me all the news in the Metropolis of Spencer."

Justice fell into the trap. He sat down beside me and launched into a lively imitation of Elijah Butts convincing the schoolboard that the old school books were better than the new ones some venturous soul had suggested.

"If he only knew how you took him off behind

his back, he wouldn't confide in you so trustingly," said I.

"That's what comes of being a bargain," replied Justice loftily. "Great ones linger in my presence, anxious to breathe the same air. The Board coddles me like a rare bit of old china and proudly exhibits me to visitors.

"Oh, by the way," he added, "I hear there's a stranger in town.

I looked up with interest. "Fine or superfine?" I asked.

"Superfine," replied Justice.

"Where from?" I inquired.

"Like Shelley's immortal soul," replied Justice solemnly, "she cometh from afar. She cometh to study Rural School Conditions—sent out by some Commission or other. She's likely to visit your school. Thought I'd tell you ahead of time so you'd manage to be on the premises when the delegation arrived. She might object to hunting through the woods for you." Here we were both overcome with laughter at the remembrance of the last "visitation" of the school board.

"I can't figure out yet why I wasn't fired," said

I, flicking a sociable spider off my lap with the stem of a leaf. "I would have been willing to bet my eyebrows on it that night. What made them change their minds, I wonder?"

"Maybe it was because they hated to lose the bargain," answered Justice, half to himself.

"Hated to lose what bargain?" I asked innocently. Then suddenly I understood.

"Justice Sherman!" I exclaimed, starting up. "Did you threaten to leave if they discharged me?"

Justice turned crimson and became reticent. "Well, I don't know as I threatened them exactly," he replied in a soothing drawl. "I don't look very threatening, now, do I?"

"Oh, Justice," was all I could say, for at the thought of what he had done for me I was stricken dumb.

Verily the power of the Bargain was great in the land!

The pageant grew under our hands until it assumed really respectable proportions. The girls and boys were wild about it and drilled tirelessly by the hour.

"I wish we had a better parade ground," sighed

Justice regretfully, squinting at the small level plot of ground in front of the schoolhouse that was worn bare of grass. "We haven't room to make a really effective showing with our drill. If only the old schoolhouse wasn't in the way we could use the space that's behind it and on both sides of it."

It was then that I had one of my old-time, wild inspirations. "Move the schoolhouse back," I said calmly.

Justice shouted. "Why not roll up the road and set it down on the other side of field?" he suggested.

"I don't see why we couldn't move the schoolhouse back," I repeated. "Why not, if it's in the way? It's no ornament, anyway."

Half-amused, half-serious, Justice looked first at me and then at the little one-story shack that went by the name of schoolhouse.

"By Jove! we can do it!" he exclaimed suddenly. "It'll be no trick at all. Just get her up on rollers and hitch Sandhelo to the pulley rope and let him wind her up. Just like that. An' zay say ze French have no sense of ze delicasse!"

"What will the Board say?" I inquired, half fearfully.

"We won't ask the Board," replied Justice calmly. "Move first, ask for orders afterwards, that's the way the great generals win battles. Remember how General Sherman cut the wires between him and Washington when he started out on his famous march to the sea, so that no short-sighted one could wire him to change his plans? Well, we're out to make this pageant a success, and we aren't going to risk it by stopping to ask too much permission. We'll move the schoolhouse first and ask permission afterward. By that time it'll be too late; the pageant is to-morrow."

And we did move it. If you had ever seen us! It wasn't such a job as you might think. I suppose the word "schoolhouse" conjures up in your mind the brick and granite pile that is Washington High —imagine moving that out of the way to make room for a military drill! 'Vantage number one for our school. We also have our points of superiority, it seems.

The old shack looked vastly better where we finally let it rest. There was a clump of bushes alongside that hid some of its battered boards beautifully. The parade ground seemed about three times as big as it had been before.

"That's more like it," said Justice approvingly. "Now we can turn around without stubbing our toes against the schoolhouse."

"What will Mr. Butts say?" I asked, beginning to have cold chills.

"Just wait until that gets between the wind and his nobility!" chuckled Justice. "Never mind, I'll take all the blame."

Nevertheless, when the crisis came, and Elijah Butts came driving up on the afternoon of the great occasion, I was there to face the music alone, Justice being nowhere in sight.

Mr. and Mrs. Butts arrived in state, bringing with them a strange lady, who I figured out must be the one Justice had told me about, the one who, like Shelley's immortal soul, had come from afar and was sent by a Commission to study rural school conditions.

I glanced wildly about to see if Justice were not hovering protectingly near, but there was no sign of him. However, I knew my duties as hostess. Nonchalantly I strolled over to the road to welcome the newcomers. Elijah Butts had just finished tying his horse and, bristling with importance, had turned to help the Commission Lady out of the rig.

"Ah-h, Miss Fairlee," he said in smooth tones, "this is—ah—Miss Adams, our teacher at the Corners school."

Then he suddenly jumped half out of his boots and stared over my shoulder as if he had seen a ghost. "Where's that schoolhouse?" he demanded, in a voice which seemed to indicate he thought I had it in my pocket.

"It's right over there," I said calmly, pointing toward the bushes.

Elijah Butts' eyes followed my fingers in a fascinated way; he could hardly believe his senses. "How did it get there?" he demanded.

"We moved it back," I replied casually. "It was in the way of the maneuvers."

Elijah Butts sputtered, choked, and was speechless.

But Miss Fairlee, the Commission lady, laughed until she had to grip the side of the buggy for support. "It's the funniest thing I ever heard," she gasped. "I've heard of the Mountain coming to Mahomet, but I never heard of the Mountain getting out of the road for Mahomet. Oh, Mr. Butts, I think the West is delightful. You people are *so* original and forceful!"

That took the wind out of Mr. Butts' sails. What could he do after that neat little speech but take the compliment to himself and pass the matter off lightly?

The pageant was a wonderful success in spite of my misgivings. I didn't forget to hand the torch to Columbia at the right moment and I didn't forget to bring the brown stockings for little Lizzie Cooper, who was the Spirit of Nature, and I made fire with the bow and drill without any mishap. But one thing was a dreadful disappointment to me. Absalom Butts was not there, and I had no chance to work out my experiment on him. Where he was I couldn't imagine. I had taken Clarissa home with me the night before to help me finish some things and she hadn't seen him since he went home from school; Mr. Butts also said he didn't know. He added, in a voice loud enough for Miss Fairlee to hear, that he would lick the tar out of him for not being in the patriotic pageant.

No one knew that I had picked Absalom in my mind to raise the flag. There had been much speculation about who was to have this honor and in order to keep everybody happy I said I would not an-

nounce this until the moment came. Then I planned to make a speech and award the honor to Absalom, thus singling him out for something besides punishment for once in his life. I had had him helping me for several days, and given him certain definite things to do on the great occasion and was much disappointed that he didn't come to do them. Justice's warning came back and I had an uneasy feeling that he was in hiding somewhere, plotting mischief.

I had a real inspiration, though, in regard to the flag raising. In a flowery speech I called upon Mr. Elijah Butts, the "President of the School Board and the most influential man in Spencer Township," to perform that rite. He swelled up until he almost burst, like the frog in the fable, as he stood there, conscious of Miss Fairlee's eye on him, with his great hairy hand on the pulley rope. Round the corner of the schoolhouse and hidden from view by the bush, I caught Justice Sherman's eye and he applauded silently with his two forefingers, meaning to say that it was a master stroke on my part. Then he dropped his eye decorously and started the singing of the National Anthem.

The pageant ended up in a picnic supper eaten on the erstwhile parade ground, and then the people began to go home through the softly falling dusk. Miss Fairlee came to me and complimented me on the success of the pageant and asked to take some notes for future use; and Elijah Butts was quite cordial as he departed. I've discovered something to-day; if you want to win a person's undying affection, single him out as the most important member of the bunch. He'll fall for it every time. You note that I am talking about male persons, now.

"Well, the show's over," said Justice, when the last of the audience had departed. "Now the actors can take it easy. Come on, let's get Sandhelo and go for a ride."

We climbed into the little cart, still covered with its pageant finery, and drove slowly down the dusty road, discussing the events of the day.

"O Justice," said I, "did you ever see anything so touching as the pride some of those poor women took in their boys and girls? They fairly glowed, some of them. And did you see that one poor woman who tried to fix herself up for the occasion? She had nothing to wear but her faded old blue

calico dress, but she had pinned a bunch of roses on the front of it to make herself look festive."

"We've started something, I think," said Justice thoughtfully. "We've taught the people how to get together and have a good time, and they like it. They'll be doing it again."

"I hope so," I replied. Then I added, "I wonder where Absalom was?"

"You see, your scheme didn't work after all," said Justice, in an I-told-you-so tone of voice. "Absalom wasn't impressed with the honor of being your right-hand man. He took the occasion to play hookey. It's a wonder he didn't try to play some trick on the rest of us; but I suppose he didn't dare, with his father there. He's afraid to draw a crooked breath when the old man's around."

"I'm disappointed," I said pensively, leaning my head back and letting the cool wind blow the hair away from my face. It had been a strenuous day and I was tired out. The strain of being afraid every minute that I would do something ridiculous or had left something undone that was of vital importance had nearly turned my hair grey. Now that it was all over without mishap, the people had

enjoyed it and my Camp Fire girls had covered themselves with glory, I relaxed into a delicious tranquillity and gave myself over to enjoyment of the quiet drive in the sweet evening air.

"Why so deucedly pensive?" inquired Justice, after we had jogged along for some minutes in silence.

"Just thanking whatever gods there be that I didn't make a holy show of myself somehow," I replied lazily. "Isn't this evening peaceful, though? Who would ever think that down around the other side of this sweet smelling earth men are killing each other like flies, and the night is hideous with the din of warfare?"

Above us the big white stars twinkled serenely, approvingly; all nature seemed in tune with my placid mood. Justice fell under the spell of it, too, and leaned back in silent enjoyment.

What was that sudden glare that shone out against the sky, over to the south? That red, lurid glare that dimmed the glory of the stars and threw buildings and barns into black relief?

"The cotton storehouse!" exclaimed Justice in a horrified voice. "Hurry!"

For once Sandhelo responded to my urging without argument, and we soon arrived on the scene of the blaze. Elijah Butts' plantation is about three miles from Spencer, and no water but the well and the cistern. "This is going to be a nice mess," said Justice, jumping out of the car and charging into the throng of gaping negroes who stood around watching the spectacle. The family of Butts had not returned from the pageant yet, having taken Miss Fairlee for a drive in the opposite direction. A few neighbors had gathered, but they stood there, gaping like the negroes and not lifting a hand to save the cotton.

"Here you, get busy!" shouted Justice, taking command like a general. Under his direction a bucket brigade was formed to check the flames as much as possible and keep the surrounding sheds from taking fire. "Go through the barn and bring out the horses and cows, if there are any there," he called to me.

I obeyed, and brought out one poor trembling bossy, the only livestock I found. Then Justice turned the command of the bucket brigade over to me and started in with one or two helpers to re-

move the cotton from the end of the storehouse that was not yet ablaze. He worked like a Trojan, his face blackened with smoke until it was hard to tell him from the negroes, the remains of his pageant costume hanging about him in tatters.

"Somebody started this fire on purpose," he panted as he paused beside me a moment to clear his lungs of smoke. "There's been oil poured on the cotton!"

Just at that moment the Butts family returned, driving into the yard at a gallop. Mr. Butts' wrath and excitement knew no bounds and he was hardly able to help effectively; he ran around for all the world like a chicken with its head off. Assistance came swiftly as people began to arrive from far and near, attracted by the blaze, but if it hadn't been for Justice's timely taking hold of the situation not a bit of the cotton would have been saved, and the house, barn and sheds would have gone up, too.

Conjectures began to fly thick and fast on all sides as to how the fire had started, and a whisper began going the rounds that soon became an open accusation. One of the negroes that works for Mr.

Butts swore he saw Absalom going into the storehouse that afternoon. My heart skipped a beat. He had not been at the celebration. Was this where he had been and what he had done the while? Elijah Butts was stamping up and down in such a fury as I had never seen.

"He couldn't get out!" he shouted hoarsely to the group that stood around him. "He's locked in the woodshed, I locked him in there myself, and there isn't even a window he could get out of!"

I started at his words. So that was where Absalom had been that afternoon. He hadn't deliberately disappointed me, then. But—Elijah Butts hadn't said that afternoon that he had locked Absalom up at home. He had pretended to be much mystified over the non-appearance of his son. Why had he done so? The answer came in a flash of intuition. Elijah Butts had probably had a set-to with Absalom over some private affair and had locked him up as punishment, but he didn't want Miss Fairlee to know that he had kept him out of the patriotic pageant and so he had denied any knowledge of Absalom's whereabouts. "The old hypocrite!" I said to myself scornfully.

"Your woodshed's wide open," said someone from the crowd. "We were in there looking for a bucket. The door was open and there wasn't nobody in it."

"He got out!" shouted Elijah Butts in still greater fury. "He got out and set fire to the cotton to spite me! Wait until I catch him! Wait till I get my hands on him!" He stamped up and down, shouting threats against his son, awful to listen to.

"I thought he'd drive that boy to turn against him yet," said Justice, drawing me away to a quiet spot, and mopping his black forehead with a damp handkerchief. "I can't say but that it served him right. After all, Absalom is a chip off the old block. That's his idea of getting even. He didn't stop to think that it was the government's loss as well as his father's. Well, it's all over but the shouting; we might as well go home."

We drove home in silence. Justice was tuckered out, I could see that, and I began to worry for fear his strenuous efforts would lay him up. I was still too much excited to feel tired. That would come later. All my energy was concentrated into disappointment over Absalom Butts. I couldn't believe that he was really as bad as this. I didn't want to

believe he had done it, and yet it seemed all too true. Why had he run away if he hadn't? I shook my head. It was beyond me.

Silently we drove into the yard and unhitched Sandhelo.

"Good night," said Justice, starting off in the direction of his cabin.

"Good night," I replied absently. I did not go right into the house. I was wide awake and knew I could not go to sleep for some time. Instead I sat in the doorway and blinked at the moon, like a touseled-haired owl. It was after midnight and everything was still, even the wind. Out of the corner of my eye I watched Justice wearily plodding along to his sleeping quarters, saw him open the screen door and vanish from sight within. Then, born clearly on the night air, I heard an exclamation come from his lips, then a frightened cry. I sped down the path like the wind to the little cabin. A lamp flared out in the darkness just as I reached it and by its light I saw Justice bending over something in a corner.

"What's the matter?" I called through the screen door.

Justice turned around with a start. "Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "Come in here."

I went in. There, crouched in a corner on the floor, was Absalom Butts, his eyes blinking in the sudden light, his face like a scared rabbit's. It was he who had cried out, not Justice.

"What's the trouble, Absalom," said I, trying to speak in a natural tone of voice, "can't you find your way home?"

"Dassent go home," replied Absalom.

"Why not?"

"Pa'll kill me."

"What for?"

"Because I ran away."

"So you've run away, have you?" said I. "Why?"

"Because pa licked me and locked me in the woodshed and wouldn't let me come to the doin's this afternoon, and I just wouldn't stand it, so I got out and cut."

"When did you get out?" I asked, leaning forward a trifle.

"This afternoon," replied Absalom. "I thought first I'd come to the doin's anyhow and help you

with those things I'd promised, but I was scared to come with pa there, so I went the other way. I walked and walked and walked, till I was tired out and most starved, because I hadn't brought anything along to eat, and I didn't know where I was headed for, anyway, and then I came along here and saw this shack and came in and sat down to rest. I must a fell asleep."

"You didn't do it, then?" said I, eagerly.

"Do what?" Absalom's tone was plainly bewildered.

"Set fire to your father's cotton storehouse."

"Whee-e-e-e-e!" Absalom's whistle of astonishment was clearly genuine. "I should say not!"

"Do you know who did?" asked Justice, watching him keenly.

"*Did* somebody?" asked Absalom innocently.

"I should say they did," said Justice, puzzled in his turn. "Are you sure you don't know anything about it?"

Absalom shook his head vigorously. "I don't know anything about it," he said straightforwardly.

"I was sure you didn't do it," I said triumphantly. "I had a feeling in my bones."

"How does it happen that you weren't at the fire?" asked Justice wonderingly. "You must have seen the glare in the sky. People came for miles around. Didn't you see it?"

Absalom shook his head. "I must a slept through it," he said simply, and followed it with such a large sigh of regret for what he had missed that Justice and I both had to smile.

"Well, there's one thing about it," said Justice, "and that is, if you *didn't* set fire to it, you'd better streak it for home about as fast as you can and clear yourself up. Everybody thinks you did it and your running away made it look suspicious. Besides, one of your father's men says he saw you coming out of the storehouse this afternoon. By the way, what *were* you doing in there?"

Absalom met his gaze unwaveringly. "Me? Why, I went in there to get my knife, that I'd left in there yesterday. I couldn't go away without my knife, could I?" He pulled it from his pocket and gazed on it fondly,—an ugly old "toad stabber."

"See here, you weren't smoking any cigarettes in there, and dropped a lighted stub, perhaps?" asked Justice.

"No," replied Absalom, "I wasn't smokin' today. I do sometimes, though," he admitted.

"Well, you don't seem to be the villain, after all," said Justice, "and I'm mighty glad to hear it. So will a lot of people be. Things looked pretty bad for you this afternoon, Absalom."

"Honest?" asked Absalom. "Do folks really think I set fire to it? What did pa say?"

Justice laughed. "What he isn't going to do to you when he catches you won't be worth doing," he said.

Absalom began to look apprehensive. "I'm afraid to go back," he said.

"What are you afraid of, if you didn't do it?" asked Justice.

"Pa wouldn't believe me," said Absalom nervously.

"Oh, I guess he'll believe you all right," I said soothingly.

"You go with me," begged Absalom, eyeing us both beseechingly. "He'll believe you. He never believes me."

"Maybe we had better," said I. "He can stay here with you the rest of the night and we'll drive over the first thing in the morning."

The next morning bright and early found us again on the scene of the fire. Early as we were, we found Elijah Butts poking in the ashes of his cotton crop with a wrathful countenance. When he saw us coming he strode to meet us and without a word laid hold of Absalom's collar. His expression was like that of a fox who has caught his goose after many hours of waiting.

"I've got you, you rascal," he sputtered, shaking Absalom until his teeth chattered. "Where did you find him?" he demanded of Justice.

"In my bunk," replied Justice, laying a hand on Mr. Butts' arm and trying to separate him from his son. "He had been there all evening, and knew nothing about the fire. He didn't do it."

"Didn't do it!" shouted Mr. Butts. "Don't tell me he didn't do it. Of course he did it! Who else did?"

We weren't prepared to answer.

"I'm sure Absalom didn't do it, Mr. Butts," said Justice earnestly. "I'd stake a whole lot on it."

"Well, I wouldn't, you can better believe!" answered Mr. Butts. "He did it, and I'm going to take it out of him." He began to march Absalom

off toward the house, urging him along with a box on the ear that nearly felled him to the ground.

Justice did it so quickly that I never will be able to tell just what it was, but in a minute there stood Elijah Butts rubbing his wrist and wearing the most surprised look I ever saw on the face of a man, and there sat Absalom on the ground half a dozen yards away.

"Beat it back to our shack, Absalom," called Justice. "I guess the climate's a little too hot around here for you just yet."

Absalom needed no second bidding. He sped down the road away from his paternal mansion as if the whole German army was after him.

"When you can treat your son like a human being he'll come back," said Justice to Mr. Butts.

"He don't need to come back," said Mr. Butts sourly, but with fury carefully toned down. Justice's use of an uncanny Japanese wrestling trick to wrench Absalom out of his vise-like grasp had created a vast respect in him. He wasn't quite sure what Justice was going to do next, and eyed him warily for a possible attack in the rear. "He don't need to come back," he mumbled stubbornly,

"until he either says he did it and takes what's coming to him, or finds out who did do it." Growling to himself he went toward the house and we drove off to overtake Absalom.

"Daggers and dirks!" exclaimed Justice. "Old Butts sure is some knotty piece of timber to drive screws into!"

It was a rather dejected trio that Sandhelo, frisking in the morning air, carried back to the house. Justice, I could see, was trying to figure out by calculus the probable result of having jiu-jitsu-ed the president of the school board; I was sorry for Absalom and Absalom was sorry for himself. Once I caught him looking at me pleadingly.

"*You* don't think I done it?" he asked anxiously.

"Not for a minute!" I answered heartily, smiling into his eyes.

He looked down, in a shame-faced way, and then he suddenly put his arm around my neck. "I'm sorry I treated you so horrid," he murmured. Think of it! Absalom, the bully, the one-time bane of my existence, the fly in the ointment, riding down the road with his arm around my neck, and me standing up for him against the world! Don't

things turn out queerly, though? Who would ever have thought it possible, six months ago?

Absalom and I had quite a few long talks in the days that followed. He confided to me his hatred of lessons and his ambition to raise horses. Father let him help him as much as he liked, and promised him a job on the place any time he wanted it. Absalom seemed utterly transformed. He fooled around the horses day and night and showed a knack of handling them that proved beyond a doubt that he had chosen his profession wisely. I did not insist upon his going to school and was glad I hadn't; for in a day or two came the "visitation" of the Board, bringing Miss Fairlee to see my school.

She was absolutely enchanted with the way we conducted things; gasped with astonishment at the graphophone and the lantern slides; exclaimed in wonder at the library; listened approvingly to the reading lesson, which was from one of the current magazines; partook generously of our dinner, cooked and served in the most approved style, and laughed heartily at the stunts we did afterward by way of entertainment. I took a naughty satisfaction in showing off my changed curriculum for her

approval and watching the effect it had on the august Board members. None of them knew exactly what I had been doing all this time, and their amazement was immense. Mr. Butts did not come with the board this time, so I was spared the embarrassment of meeting him. Without him the rest of the Board were like sheep that had gotten separated from the bell-wether; they didn't know which direction to head into until Miss Fairlee expressed her unqualified approval of my methods; then they all endorsed it emphatically.

"I wish I were a pupil again, so I could have you for a teacher!" said Miss Fairlee when school was out, and I considered that the highest compliment I had ever received. I immediately invited her to attend our Ceremonial Meeting that night and she accepted the invitation eagerly. We held it on the old parade ground in front of the school. In honor of our guest we acted out the pretty Indian legend of Kir-a-wa and the Blackbirds and when we came to the place where we rush out looking for the two crows we found two real ones sitting on the fence, only, instead of attacking us as the ones did in the legend, these two applauded vigorously. They were Justice and Absalom, come with

Sandhelo and the cart to take me home, or rather what was left of me after the blackbirds had picked me to pieces.

"Another day gone without mishap!" I said, as Justice slid back the stable door and I walked in with my arm around Sandhelo's neck. "Sandhelo will have to have a lump of sugar and an extra soft bed to celebrate. Come on, Sandy, let me tuck you in."

But Sandhelo would not enter his stall. He stuck his head in, sniffed the air, and then, with a squeal that always heralds an outbreak of temperament, he rose on his hind legs and began to dance.

"Whatever has gotten into him?" I began, tugging at his tail, which was the nearest thing I could get my hand onto, when suddenly a wild shriek rose up from under our very feet and in the dimness of the stall we saw something roll over and crouch in a corner.

"Quick, the lantern!" said Justice.

But we couldn't find it.

Then from the depths of the stall there came a voice, crying in terrified tones, "Don' take me, mister Debble; don' take me, mister Debble, I done it, I done it; I set fiah to 'at ole cotton to get even

with old Mister Butts fer settin' de dawgs on me; I done it, I done it; go 'way, Mister Debble, don' take me, I'll tell dem; only don' take me, Mister Debble!"

Justice and Absalom and I stood frozen to the spot, listening to this remarkable outcry. Then Justice raised the lantern, which he just spied on the floor, and lighting it held it in the stall. By its flickering rays we saw a negro crouching in the corner, whose rolling eyes and trembling limbs showed him to be beside himself with fright.

"Glory!" exclaimed Justice. "It's the same old bird we saw in the road that day, the one I said looked like mischief!"

Here Sandhelo, nosing me aside, looked inquisitively over my shoulder and the darky immediately went into another spasm of fright, covering his face with his hands and imploring "Mister Debble" not to take him this time.

"Whee-e-e-e-!" said Justice, whistling in his astonishment. "He's the one that fired the cotton and now he thinks Sandhelo is the devil coming after him!"

"Mercy, what an awful creature!" said I, shuddering and looking the other way. "If Sandhelo gets

a good look at him I'm afraid he'll return the compliment about taking him for His Satanic Nibs."

"There's only one way you can keep him from getting you," said Justice to the darky gravely. "That's by going to Mr. Butts and telling him yourself that you did it. Otherwise, it's good-bye, Solomon."

Here Sandhelo, as if he understood what was going on, suddenly snapped at the black legs stretched out across his stall.

"I'll tell him, I'll tell him!" shuddered Solomon, and with a prolonged howl of terror he fled from the stable and down the road in the direction of the Butts plantation.

"He'll tell him all right," chuckled Justice. "He'll face a dozen Elijah Buttses, before he lets the devil get him. Poor Sandhelo! Rather rough on him, though, to have his name used as a terror to evil doers!"

Talk about nothing ever happening around here! O you darling Winnebagos, with your ladylike advantages, and your mildly eventful lives, you don't know what real excitement is!

Worn out, but happily yours,

KATHERINE.

GLADYS TO KATHERINE

April 10, 19—.

Dearest old K:

The Winnebagos have scored again, although it did take us nearly all year to make this particular basket. I know that if you had been here, you old miracle worker, you would have found the way before the first month had passed, but, not having your gift for seeing right through people's starched shirtwaists and straight into their hearts, we had to wait for chance to show us the way. And it turned out the way it usually does for the Winnebagos—we stooped to pick up a common little stone and found a pearl of great price. Of course, now there are lots of people who would like to be the setting for that pearl, but she belongs to the Winnebagos by right of discovery and we mean to keep her for our very own. For, after all, who but the Winnebagos could have discovered Sally Prindle, when up to that very week, day, hour and minute she hadn't even discovered herself? The chances are that she

never would have, either, and what a shame it would have been!

You remember my telling about Sally Prindle long ago, the time we tried to fix up her room for her and she wouldn't let us? Of course she hurt our feelings, because we hadn't been trying to patronize her and didn't deserve to be snubbed, but we got over it in a day or two and saw her side of it. It probably *was* annoying to have three separate delegations take notice of your poverty in one day, and there was no telling how tactless the first two had been. At the second meeting of the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS, held on and around Oh-Pshaw's bed, we formally decided, with much speechifying by Agony and Oh-Pshaw, that Sally would be the special object of our Give Service Pledge. We would make her feel that we didn't care a rap whether she was poor or not; that it was she herself we cared about. We would ask her to share all our good times and would drop in to see her often, as good neighbors should, and would finally bring her around to the point where she would begin to Seek Beauty for herself, see that her bare room was too ugly for any good use, and gladly

share our overflow with us. Oh, we planned great things that night!

"Let's go over and call on her right away," suggested Hinpoha, who was fired with enthusiasm at the plan and couldn't wait to begin the program of Give Service.

Off we went down the hall, filled with virtuous enthusiasm. Sally was at home because we could see the light shining through the transom.

"Wait a minute, don't knock," whispered Agony with a giggle. "I know a lot more Epic way." She pulled a candy kiss from her pocket, scribbled an absurd note on a piece of paper about weary travelers waiting at the gate, tied it to the kiss and threw it through the transom.

We heard it strike the floor and heard Sally rise from a creaking chair and pick it up. Giggling, we waited for her to come and let us in. In a minute her footsteps came toward the door and with comradely smiles we stepped forward. The door was opened a very small crack, and out flew the kiss, much faster than it had gone in. It just missed Hinpoha's nose by a hair's breadth and fell on the floor with a spiteful thud. Then the door

slammed emphatically. We looked at each other in consternation.

"Whee-e-e-e-e-!" said Agony in a long-drawn whistle.

"Horrid—old—thing!" said Hinpoha, picking up the kiss from the floor and holding it up for us to see that the note had never been opened. Feeling both foolish and hurt we trailed back home and sadly gave up the idea of Giving Service to Sally Prindle.

"Let her alone, she isn't worth worrying about," said Hinpoha, beginning to be just as cross as she had been enthusiastic before. "She hasn't a spark of sociability in her."

"There are Hermit Souls——" began Oh-Pshaw, and Agony cut in with

"Twinkle, twinkle, little Sal,
How we'd like to be your pal,
But you hold your nose so high
You don't see us passing by."

That ended Sally Prindle as far as the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS were concerned. But I had

an uncomfortable feeling all the time that if Nyoda had been there she would have managed to become friendly with Sally in some way, and that we had failed to "warm the heart" of this "lonely mortal" who "stood without our open portal." Sally haunted me. How any girl could live and not be friendly with the people she saw every day was more than I could understand. She just grubbed away at her lessons, paid no attention to what went on around her, snubbed any girl who tried to make advances and lived a life of lofty detachment. She was a good student and invariably recited correctly when called upon, but beyond that none of the teachers could get a particle of warmth out of her, not even fascinating Miss Allison, who has all her classes worshipping at her feet.

Sally worried me for a while; then she moved out of Purgatory and took a room with some private family in town and as I hardly ever saw her any more I forgot her after a time. Life is so *very* full here, Katherine dear, that you can't bother much about any one person.

Of course, the big thought that runs through everything this year, all our work and all our play,

is the War and what we can do to help. At the beginning of the year Brownell pledged herself to raise five thousand dollars for the Red Cross by various activities; this was outside of the personal subscription fund. A big Christmas bazaar and several benefit performances brought the total close to four thousand, but the last thousand proved to be a sticker. Various committees were called to discuss ways and means of raising the money, but they never could agree on anything for the whole college to do together, and finally abandoned the quest for a bright idea and decided to let everybody raise money in any way they could think of and put it all together to make up the total. The Board of Trustees offered a silver loving cup to the individual, club, sorority, group or clique of any kind that raised the largest amount inside of a month.

The day that was announced there was a hastily called meeting of the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS.

"We're going to win that loving cup," declared Hinpoha in a tone of finality. "This is our chance to show what we're made of. Up until now we've been doing little easy 'Give Services.' At last we're

up against something big. Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party. The WINNEBAGOS have never fallen down on anything yet that they undertook and they're not going to now. We're going to win that contest. Won't Nyoda be proud of us?"

We cheered unil the windows rattled and then Migwan brought us to earth with a thud. "How are we going to do it?" she asked soberly. We all fell silent and donned our thinking caps. Minutes passed but nobody sprouted a bright idea. Suggestion after suggestion was made, only to be turned down flat.

"We might give a circus," suggested Hinpoha rather doubtfully. "Remember the circus we gave at home last year?"

"There have been nine circuses of various kinds already this year," wet-blanketed Agony. "You couldn't hire anybody to attend another."

"Masquerade as seeresses and give select parlor readings of people's futures," suggested Oh-Pshaw. "We could charge five dollars for a reading."

"Been done already," said Migwan. "Anyway, the faculty have forbidden it. The girls that did it

last year scandalized a prominent Trustee's wife by telling her that her daughter was going to elope with an Italian count before the month was out. The daughter had married a minister the week before, only the girls didn't know it, and the Trustee's wife got so excited she sat down on a two-hundred-dollar Satsuma vase and smashed it and tried to sue the seeresses for damages. Then, of course, she found out they were students and the faculty put an end to parlor seeresses."

That's the way it went. Not a plan was suggested but what turned out to be old stuff or not practicable.

"Oh, for an idea!" groaned Agony, beating her white brow with the palm of her hand.

"We might go round with a hand organ," suggested Oh-Pshaw in desperation. "Gladys could be the monkey and pass around a tin cup."

"Thanks, I wouldn't think of aspiring to such an honor," I replied modestly.

"What we want," said Migwan decidedly, "is a fad—something that will take the college by storm and separate them from their cash. I remember last year some of the seniors started the fad of tak-

ing impressions of the palm of your hand on paper smoked with camphor gum and sending them away to have the lines read by some noted palmist, and they made oceans of money at twenty-five cents an impression."

We talked possible fads until we were green in the face, but nobody got an inspiration and we finally adjourned with our heads in a whirl.

The next day I went into a deserted classroom for a book I had left behind and found Sally Prindle with her head down on one of the desks, crying. By that time I had forgotten how disagreeable she had been to us and hastened over to see what was the matter.

"What's the trouble, Sally?" I asked, laying my hand on her shoulder.

Sally started up and tried to wipe the tears away hastily. "Nothing," she answered in a flat voice.

"There is too something," I said determinedly, and sat down on the desk in front of her.

She looked at me sort of defiantly for a minute and then she broke down altogether. Between sobs she told me that she wasn't going to be able to come back to college next year because she hadn't

won the big Andrews prize in mathematics she had counted confidently on winning, and she had worked so hard for it that she had neglected her other work, and the first thing she knew she had a condition in Latin. Besides, she was sick and couldn't do the hard work she had been doing outside to pay her board.

I never saw anyone so broken up over anything. I wouldn't have expected her to care whether she came back to college or not; I couldn't see what fun she had ever gotten out of it, but I suppose in her own queer way she must have enjoyed it. I tried to comfort her by telling her that the way would probably be found somehow if she took it up with the right people, but Sally wasn't the kind of girl that took comfort easily. Life was terribly serious to her. She felt disgraced because she hadn't won the prize and was sure nobody would want to lend her money to finish her course. I left her at last with my heart aching because of the uneven way things are distributed in this world.

Our room was a mess when I got back. Our floor was entertaining the floor below that night and Hinpoha was in the show. She was standing in the

middle of the room draping my dresser scarf around her shoulders for a fichu, while Agony was piling her hair high on her head for her and Oh-Pshaw was pinning on a train made of bath towels.

"Have you a blue velvet band?" Hinpoha demanded thickly, as I entered, through the pins she was holding in her mouth.

"No, I haven't," I replied, retiring to a corner to escape the sweeping strokes of the hair brush in Agony's hand.

"Why haven't you?" lamented Hinpoha. "I just *have* to have one."

"What for?" I asked.

"To put around my neck, of course," explained Hinpoha impatiently. "It's absolutely necessary to finish off this costume. Go out and scrape one up somewhere, Gladys, there's a dear."

I obediently made the rounds, but nowhere did I find the desired blue band. Not even a ribbon of the right shade was forthcoming.

"Paint one on," suggested Agony, with an inspiration born of despair. "Then you'll surely have it the right shade."

"The paint box is in the bottom dresser drawer,"

said Hinpoha, warming to the plan at once. "Hurry up, Agony."

"Oh, I'll not have time to do it," said Agony, moving toward the door. "I've got just fifteen minutes left to sew the ruffle back on the bottom of my white dress to wear in chapel to-morrow when we sing for the bishop, and it's really more important for the country's cause that I have a white dress to wear to-morrow than that you have a blue band around your neck to-night. My green and purple plaid silk would look chaste and retiring among the spotless white of the choir, now, wouldn't it?" And swinging her hairbrush she went out. Oh-Pshaw had already disappeared.

"Here, Gladys," said Hinpoha, holding out the box to me, "mix the turquoise with a little ultramarine."

"I'm awfully sorry, 'Poha, but I can't stop," said I. "I've an interview with Miss Allison in five minutes. Get somebody else, dear."

"Everybody's rushed to death," grumbled Hinpoha.

I went off to keep my appointment and Hinpoha took up her watch for a passer-by whom she could

bully into painting a blue band on her neck. Being part of the surprise for the guests she couldn't very well go out and risk being seen; she just had to stay in the room and wait for someone from our floor to come along. For a long while nobody came, and then, when she was about ready to give up, she did hear footsteps coming down the corridor. It was dark by that time and she couldn't see who it was, but she pounced out like a cat on a mouse and dragged the girl into her room.

"Paint a blue band on my neck, quick!" she commanded, thrusting out the paint box and switching on the light.

Then she saw who it was. It was Sally Prindle. Hinpoha was a little taken aback, but she had about exhausted her patience waiting for someone to come by and help her.

"Will you, please?" she pleaded, holding out the paints enticingly.

"What is it?" asked Sally dully, looking at Hinpoha in that crazy costume as if she thought she was not in her right mind.

Hinpoha explained the urgent and immediate need of a blue band of a certain shade on her neck.

"But I never painted anything before," objected Sally.

"You'll never learn any younger," said Hinpoha, jubilant that Sally hadn't walked out with her nose in the air. "Here, take the brush, I'll show you what to mix; see, this and this and this."

Under Hinpoha's direction Sally painted the blue band and then regarded her handiwork with critical eyes.

"Thanks, that's fine," said Hinpoha, holding out her hand for the paints.

"It needs something more," said Sally slowly, squinting at Hinpoha's neck. "Do you mind if I use any more paint?"

"Go as far as you like," said Hinpoha, surprised into flippancy, "let your conscience be your guide!"

Sally made swift dabs at the little color squares, her face all puckered up in a deep frown of concentration.

"Now, how do you like it?" she asked anxiously, after a few minutes, leading Hinpoha to the mirror.

Hinpoha says she screamed right out when she looked, she was so surprised and delighted. For

on the front of the band Sally had painted the most wonderful ornament. It was an enormous ruby, set in a gold frame, the design of which simply took your breath away. How she ever did it with the colors in Hinpoha's box is beyond us.

"Oh, wonderful!" raved Hinpoha, hugging Sally in her extravagant way. "I can't wait until the girls see it. Won't I make a sensation, though! Come to the party, won't you please, Sally? We'd love to have you."

Sally shook her head and prepared to depart. "I have to go," she said with a return to her old brusque manner. "I have another engagement."

But Hinpoha saw the wistful look that came into her face and she knew that Sally's "other engagement" was waiting on table in the boarding house where she lived.

Hinpoha's painted jewelry created a sensation all right. Cries of admiration rose on every side, and the fact that the stony-faced Sally Prindle had done it only added to the sensation. Who would ever have suspected that the most inartistic-looking girl in the whole college had such a talent up her sleeve?

Two days later there was another excited meeting of the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS.

"Our fortune's made!" shrieked Agony joyfully, dancing around the room and waving a Japanese umbrella over her head.

"Why? How?" we all cried.

"The fad! The fad!" shouted Agony.

"What fad?" I asked. "Do stop capering, Agony, and put down that umbrella before you break the lamp shade. We've smashed three already this year."

"Don't you see," continued Agony, breathless, dropping down on the bed and fanning herself with the handle of the umbrella. "Hinpoha's started a fad with that painted jewelry—blessings on that fool notion of hers of painting a band on her neck, anyway! Half a dozen girls came to classes this morning with bands painted on their necks and ornaments in front that they'd gotten Sally to paint for them. In another day the whole college will be after her to paint ornaments on their necks. Don't you see what I mean? We've got to join forces with Sally, set up in business for the Benefit of the Red Cross—and the cup is ours. Whoop-la! Oh, girls, don't you *see!*"

We saw, all right. Inside of two minutes Sally was voted a member of the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS and in a few hours business was in full swing. Sally, of course, was the star of the cast, but the rest of us worked just as hard as press agents. We placarded the whole college with posters announcing that Mme. Sallie Prindle, the distinguished painter of jewelry, would create, for the benefit of the Red Cross, any combination of precious stones desired by the paintee—charges twenty-five cents and up. Students were urged to show their patriotism by appearing in classroom adorned with one of the masterpieces of the above-mentioned Prindle.

It was a success from the word go. The fad spread like wildfire, and Sally spent all her waking hours that were not actually taken up with recitations painting jewelry on fair necks and arms. Lessons were almost forgotten in the fascinating business of admiring designs and comparing effects, and many were the wails because the wonderful things had to be washed off all too soon. We had offered our room as studio because Sally's was too far away from the center of things, and most of the

time it was so crowded with eager customers that we couldn't get in ourselves. Prices rose as business increased, and the candy box we were using for a bank showed signs of collapsing.

The next week the juniors gave a dance and they all ordered dog collars for the occasion. Everybody else had to stand aside. Prices for these were to be one dollar and up, according to how elaborate they were. How Sally ever got them all on without fainting in her tracks will always be a mystery. She did a lot of them the night before and then the girls wound their necks with gauze bandages to keep them clean. Miss Allison, who dropped in during the performance, folded up on the bed and laughed until she was weak.

"I never saw anything to equal it, never," she declared. "There's never been such a fad in the history of the college." Then she sat up and demanded a dog collar herself.

"Why on earth didn't you tell us you could paint jewelry, Sally Prindle?" she asked, as she watched those swift fingers doing their wonderful work. "Of all things, wasting your time specializing in mathematical figures, when all the time you had designs like these in your head!"

"I never knew I could do it," said Sally in a funny, bewildered fashion that set the girls all a-laughing. "I never had a paint brush in my hand before. *She,*"—pointing to Hinpoha—"put the things into my hands and ordered me to paint, and I painted. It came to me all of a sudden."

Did we get the loving cup? I should say we did! By the end of the month we had raised five hundred and some odd dollars, more than half of the total, and by far the largest amount raised by any group. We were all wrecks by the time it was over, because we had to take turns waiting on table down at Sally's boarding house to hold her job for her while she worked up in our room; besides getting the paint off the girls' necks again. That wasn't always an easy job because sometimes she had to use things beside water colors to get certain effects.

But it was well worth our while, for the LAST OF THE WINNEBAGOS have achieved undying fame. Migwan started it with her fake Indian legend and the rest of us surely carried it to a grand finish. The best of the whole business, though, was getting Sally.

Do you know why she was so queer and stand-

offish to people all this while? She told us in a burst of confidence that night after we had been given the loving cup. O Katherine, it would almost break your heart. It seems she has a brother who forged a note last year and was sent to prison. She considered that money a debt of honor which she must pay back, and so she came away to college, planning to work her way through and become a teacher of mathematics, which was her strong subject. But she had taken her brother's disgrace so to heart that she thought the people in college would consider her an outcast if they found it out, and, rather than go through the misery of having people drop her after they had been friendly with her she made up her mind to make no friends at all, and then she didn't need to worry about their finding it out and cutting her. It broke her all up to turn down our offers of friendship last fall and she left Purgatory because she couldn't bear to see us after that.

Think of it, Katherine, what she must have suffered, and nobody to tell it to! And everybody calling her a prune! We all cried over her and assured her a million times we didn't care a rap

what her brother had done; we loved her and were proud to have her for a friend. She was a different girl after that. All the stiffness came out of her like magic and she looked like a person who has been let out of prison after being shut up for years. Her great dread all the time had been that somebody would find out about her brother; now that we actually knew it and it didn't make a bit of difference, the big load was off her spirits. From being the most unpopular girl in the class she suddenly became one of the most popular.

All her money troubles faded too, because she got work making designs for a big Art Craft jewelry shop that paid her enough so she didn't have to borrow any more money.

The nicest part of it all, though, was what Agony did. The night that Sally Prindle told us about her brother Agony wrote to her father, who, I imagine, must be a very influential man, and asked if he could get Sally's brother pardoned. Just how Agony's father went about it we will never know, but not long afterward Sally got a letter from her brother saying that he had been pardoned on the condition that he would enlist in the army, which he had done.

Think what that meant to Sally! Instead of being afraid anyone would find out she had a brother she could now speak of him as proudly as the other girls did who had brothers in the army; could take her place with the proudest of them.

Oh, Katherine, if we could only see right through people and know just why they do things the way they do, what a wonderful world this would be!

Lovingly yours,

GLADYS.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

April 25, 19—.

Dearest Winnies:

I thought it had all happened, that is, everything that was going to happen for the next ten years, but it seemed that the excitement of the last few weeks was but a beginning, and a very humble beginning at that! We had just gotten over the sensation of the fire and the arrest of the negro, and school was in running order again and life in general had resumed the even tenor of its ways, when, without warning, the sky fell on the house of Adams. They say that coming events cast their shadows before, and that everything works out according to a fixed rule, but this could only have been the exception that proved the rule. Having battered around this wicked world for twenty years I thought I was prepared for all the shocks that human flesh is heir to, and that no matter what happened there was a special rule of etiquette to fit it, but there was nothing in all my experience,

nor in the Ten Commandments, nor Hoyle, nor Avogadro's Hypothesis, nor Grimm's Law, that prepared me for what happened next.

Saturday was the fateful day. Saturday is the day on which everything happens to me. I was born on Saturday; it was on Saturday I met you and landed headfirst into the Winnebago circus; it was on Saturday I heard the news that I was not to go to college, and, I suppose, in the order of human events, I shall die on Saturday.

On this Saturday morning—can it be only yesterday?—I sat in the doorway peacefully knitting and occasionally gazing off into space as my thoughts wandered, flitting from subject to subject like the yellow butterflies that flashed from flower to flower. The sunshine sprayed over the roof and glinted on my amber needles, until it seemed that I was knitting sunshine right into the socks. I was filled with a vast contentment that throbbed in my temples and quivered in my toes; from head to foot I was "in tune with the infinite." That morning father and I had gone over our accounts and our balance was so satisfactory that we figured in another year we could finish paying off the mortgage.

When I complimented father on his talent for stock farming, he said simply: "It's all owing to you. You put new life into us again. We never could have done it alone. Besides, I reckon most of the sharp bargaining in horseflesh was done by you. You got more out of people than I ever did. You've kept up the collections, too. You never got cheated once. You're certainly worth your salt as a business manager, child."

Imagine it! Calling me his business manager! I wasn't an absolute good-for-nothing, then.

All these things went serenely through my mind as I sat there knitting in the sunshine, and laying my plans for summer pleasures. I would take the Wenonahs and go off camping somewhere in the woods for a week or two and give them a taste of real life in the open. The picture of that little camp rose vividly before me, and I planned out the details minutely. We would have to have a tent—somewhere or other I must acquire this necessary article. A humorous thought came to me of moving the schoolhouse out into the woods for a camper's dwelling, and in imagination I saw it bumping along behind us on our journey, with Jus-

tice walking along beside it, carrying the chimney in his arms. I laughed aloud at my incongruous fancies, startling a hen that was clucking at my feet so that she fled with a scandalized squawk, stopping a few yards away to look around at me inquiringly, as if trying to figure out what was coming from me next. The hen broke up my fancies and I returned to my knitting with a start to find I had dropped several stitches and had a place in the heel of my sock that looked like the stem end of an apple. I raveled back and painstakingly reknitted the heel, then I laid my knitting in my lap and gazed dreamily up the road, resting my eyes on the tender greenness of the fields.

Sitting thus I saw an automobile coming into view along the road. I watched it idly, glittering in the sunlight. To my surprise it turned into our lane and approached the house. I went down to the drive to meet it; tourists frequently stopped at the houses for water or for directions, and I would save these people the trouble of getting out of the car. The big machine rolled up to the drive and came to a standstill with a soft sliding of brakes.

Then a loud, hearty voice called out, "Why here

she is now! Katherine Adams, don't you know me? Don't suppose you do, with these infernal glasses on."

I looked hard at the man in the long linen dust coat and tourist cap who sat alone in the car; then my eyes nearly popped out of my head.

"Why, Judge Dalrymple!" I exclaimed, starting forward with a cry of joy and seizing the outstretched hand. "Where did you come from? Are you touring? How did you ever happen to stop here?" I tumbled the questions out thick and fast.

"I didn't 'happen' to stop here," said the Judge in his decisive way. "I've been rolling over these endless roads for three days on purpose to get here. Lord, what a God-forsaken country! And now that I *am* here at last," he added, "aren't you going to ask me in? Where's your father?"

"Excuse me," said I, blushing furiously. "I was so taken by surprise at seeing you that I even forgot my own name, to say nothing of my manners. Come right in."

I settled him in the best chair in the house, brought him a glass of water and left him talking to mother in his hearty way while I went out in search

of father. Father was painting a shed when I found him, and he came just the way he was, with streaks of paint on his jumper and overalls. If he had had any inkling of what he was being summoned to——!

Judge Dalrymple was just as pleased to meet father in his paint-streaked jumper as if he had been a senator in a silk hat, and after the first moment of embarrassment father felt as if the Judge were an old-time friend.

Then the Judge began to explain why he had come, and the bomb dropped on the roof of the house of Adams. I couldn't comprehend it at first any more than father could. It sounded like a page out of Grimm's Fairy Tales. But it seemed that he knew all about the company my father had lost his money in last summer, and he and some other men bought it up and set it on its feet again. War orders had suddenly boomed it and it was now solid as a rock. The original stockholders still held their shares and would draw their dividends as soon as they were declared, which Judge Dalrymple prophesied would be soon. Our days of struggling were over. We were "hard-uppers" no longer; we were "well off" at last. I left the Judge and father

talking over the details of the business and wandered aimlessly around the dooryard, trying to comprehend the meaning of what had happened to us, and capering as each new thing occurred to me. My narrow horizon had suddenly rolled back and the whole world lay before me. College—travel—study—return to my beloved friends in the east—best doctors for mother—all those things kaleidoscoped before me, leaving me giddy and faint. I seized a hoe and began to demolish an ant hill for sheer exuberance of spirits.

"What's the matter, have you had a sunstroke?" asked Justice Sherman, suddenly appearing beside me from somewhere.

"Worse than that, it's an earthquake," I replied. "Take a deep breath, Justice Sherman, because you're going to need it in a minute."

Then I told him about father's investing his money in the western oil company last summer and apparently losing it, and how the company had unexpectedly come to life again.

"Whew!" said Justice, looking dazed for a minute; then he expressed the sincerest joy at our good fortune I have ever heard one mortal express at the prosperity of another. But after his congratu-

lations were all made he stopped short as if he had just thought of something and then he said slowly, "I suppose you'll be going away from here now; moving out west, possibly to San Francisco?" It seemed to me that he looked very sober at the thought.

"Not if I know it," I replied decisively. "It'll be the east for me, if I go anywhere, where the Winnebagos have their hunting grounds."

"You *are* going away then?" asked Justice composedly.

"I don't know," I replied truthfully. "Nothing is settled yet. Give us time to catch our breath. In the meantime, come in and meet our guest, the new president of the Pacific Refining Company, who came to tell us the good news."

Justice assumed an exaggerated air of dignity and formality that upset my composure so I could hardly keep my face straight as I walked into the house.

"Oh, Judge," I called blithely, "here is the rest of the happy family. Justice, this is Judge Dalrymple."

Then the second bomb dropped.

For, at the sight of Justice, Judge Dalrymple

sprang out of his chair with a hoarse sound in his throat as if he were choking, and stood staring at him as if he had seen a ghost. Justice looked fit to drop.

"Father!" he said weakly.

"Justice!" said Judge Dalrymple with dry lips. "How did you get here? Where have you been all this time?"

"Out west," replied Justice.

"Why didn't you tell us where you were??" asked the Judge, sitting down heavily again.

"I merely followed your instructions," replied Justice with dignity. "You told me to get out; that you didn't ever want to hear from me again, and I took you at your word."

"I was a fool, a blind fool, and in a great rage when I said that. I didn't mean it," said the Judge, in a choking voice.

"But you said it, nevertheless," replied Justice, "and I was hot-headed and went."

"What have you been doing all this time?" asked the Judge curiously.

"Roughing it," replied Justice, in the tone of one who has great adventures to tell, "until I came here and turned into a professor." A humorous twinkle

lit up his eye as he mentioned the word "Professor."

In a daze of astonishment father, mother and I watched this unexpected meeting and reconciliation between father and son. In due time we had all the story. Judge Dalrymple had set his heart on having his oldest son, Justice, become a lawyer like himself, and go into his law firm as junior partner. But Justice had no liking for the law. All he wanted to do was tinker with electrical things. It was the only thing in the world he cared for. When he got through college and his father insisted upon his entering the law school he flatly refused. There was a scene and he and his father quarreled bitterly. His father told him he could either go to law school or get out and hoe for himself and he chose the latter. He left home. All the while he had been in college he had been working on an electrical device to enable deaf men to receive wireless messages. He now went to work on this and finished it, and, boylike, thought his fortune was made. But it seemed fortune had turned her back on him. He had no money himself to market the device and he could not succeed in interesting anyone with capital. He spent many weary days, going from one place to another with his invention, only to meet

with failure on all sides. He had always had delicate health and the long hours he had spent indoors working on his beloved experiments finally told on him and he developed a throat trouble which made it impossible for him to stay in the north. One day, in a moment of great discouragement, he threw his invention into the New York harbor and sorrowfully gave up his dream of being an inventor. He was down and out but still too proud to write home and ask help from his father. He had a chance to act as chauffeur for a party of ladies who wanted to tour the west and in this manner he made his way to Texas. He worked there on a sheep ranch for a number of months; then, seized with a desire to see the country, he worked his way through the Territory and into Arkansas, and finally into the township of Spencer, where he was attacked by robbers one night on the road, robbed of all his belongings and left lying there with his head cut open. Then it was that he had wandered into our stable, was found, and nursed back to health.

Our climate agreed with him so well that he decided to stay for a while, and got the position of teaching in the high school at Spencer, which wasn't very hard work. The long walk or drive in the

open, back and forth every day, and his sleeping in the airy shack, gradually worked a cure to his throat, and brought back the health he had lost through overwork and disappointment.

Besides—just listen to this, will you—he said that I had given him such an amazing new outlook on life that he wanted to stay as near to me as he could and learn my philosophy. He had been utterly discouraged when he came, had lost his grip on things, and didn't care a hang what became of him, but I had put new life and ambition back into him. Imagine it! My philosophy!

He had resolved to have nothing more to do with his father after he had turned him out, and dropped the name of Dalrymple, going by the name of Justice Sherman. His full name was Justice Sherman Dalrymple.

Thus ended the mystery of the scholarly sheep herder. The son of *my* Judge Dalrymple! I couldn't believe it, but it was true beyond a doubt. I *did* know a hawk from a handsaw, after all. No wonder he had looked so sad sometimes when he thought no one was watching him, with such memories to brood over! No wonder he had acted so queerly when I told him what we had done to

Antha and Anthony up on Ellen's Isle. They were his younger brother and sister!

Judge Dalrymple was speaking to Sherman again. "So you threw your invention into the New York Harbor, did you?" he said regretfully. "It's too bad, because some one to whom you showed it has been writing and writing to the house about it. I couldn't forward the letter because I had no idea where you were. The Government wants to try out your invention. I never dreamed that those fool experiments you were forever making amounted to anything. I see now you were wiser than I. Come home, boy, and tinker all you like. We'll throw the lawyer business into the discard. Could you build up your thingummyjig again?"

At this astonishing news Justice began whooping like a wild Indian. "Could I build it up again?" he shouted. "Just give me a chance. Just watch me!" He seized me around the waist and began jigging with me all over the floor.

"Save the pieces," I panted, sinking into a chair and making a vain attempt to smooth back my flying hair.

Then I noticed that Judge Dalrymple was looking at me with eyes filled with awe, not to say fear.

"Girl, what are you?" he asked in a strange voice. "Are you Fate? Every time I come in touch with you, you work some miracle in my household. First you perform a magic in my two younger children, and then when I attempt to make some slight return for your great service and seek you out, I find that you have also drawn my other child to you from out of the Vast and worked as great a miracle in him. Are you human or superhuman, that you can play with people's destinies like that? Under what star were you born, anyway?"

"Weren't any stars at all," I replied, laughing. "The sun was shining!"

O my Winnies, what a day this has been! The sun rose exactly as on any other day, without any warning of what was coming, and yet before he set the world had been turned topsy turvy for five people! Isn't life glorious, though? Mercy, but I'm glad I was born!

Breathlessly yours,

KATHERINE.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

APRIL 27, 19—.

OH, MY WINNIES:

How can I tell it? Father died to-day. Heart failure, brought on by excitement over the fire and the coming of Judge Dalrymple. Think of it! After all these years of hard work and grinding poverty and bitter disappointment, to fall just at the moment when success and prosperity were within reach. Oh, the terrible irony of Life!

Your broken-hearted

KATHERINE.

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

MAY 9, 19—.

DEAREST WINNIES:

Thanks, a thousand times, for all the beautiful, comforting letters you wrote. When did anyone ever have such friends as I? Everyone has been so kind, so sympathetic. The whole countryside turned out to help us. Judge Dalrymple and Justice are still here, straightening up father's affairs. The

farm and the stock are to be sold. Mother is sick; father's death was a great shock to her. As soon as she is better she and I are going home with Judge Dalrymple for a visit. We are going to motor back with him and Justice—won't it be glorious? Justice is going back home to live. He and his father have become great pals; it is perfect joy to watch them going about like two boys, arm in arm. You never see one without the other any more. Now that they are together it is possible to see quite a resemblance, but Justice is much handsomer than his father ever could have been. Sandhelo acted just as though he remembered the Judge from last summer; he squealed when he saw him and put his nose into his pocket. We had a council about what should become of Sandhelo and finally decided that he was to be sent home to Judge Dalrymple's to be a pet for Antha and Anthony. Sandhelo nodded solemnly when we told him, as much as to say it was all right with him. I have a queer feeling all the time that that mule is more than half human. He has such an uncanny way of taking people's affairs into his own hands, sometimes. Did he not recognize Justice in the road that night when I would have fled from him, thinking he was the negro, Solomon, and

didn't he scare Solomon into confessing that he had set fire to Elijah Butts' cotton storehouse?

To-morrow is May 10th, the date that school closes in this district, and I have planned a farewell celebration for the scholars. I am going to give them "for keeps" all the things that came from the House of the Open Door, besides all the splendid things that came for Christmas, to be the property of the Corners schoolhouse from that time on henceforward, to make of it another House of the Open Door.

MAY 10TH, EVENING.

Another amazing day! Do you know, I half believe that I have been transported in a dream back to the land of witches and fairies, and have to keep pinching myself to make sure I'm still myself, Katherine Adams, and not some other girl who has gotten into my shoes by mistake. I have a dreadful fear that I will find my real self sitting in the road somewhere, tumbled off old Major's back as he ambled along, reading in some book of romance the wonderful things that are happening to this new, strange self. And presently it will be time to go

home and help with supper, and romance will come to an end with the closing of the book.

But I guess I'm real, all right. Before the door stands Judge Dalrymple's car, latest model; its loud, raucous voice containing no hint of elfin horns as it announces the return of Justice and his father from a spin in the country. Beside me on the table is the deed of sale of our property, made out to one Jim Wiggin, and drawn up on very substantial-looking paper; and on my wrist sparkles the beautiful little gold watch which is a very tangible souvenir of this last amazing day. It ticks away companionably, as if to reassure me of its realness. I have named it Thomas Tickle, and we are going to be inseparable friends.

You remember I told you I had planned a little last-day-of-school celebration for the scholars? Well!!! As it turned out, it made the Pageant look like five cents' worth of laundry soap by comparison. When I got to school in the morning I found the schoolhouse draped with flags and bunting, inside and outside, and my desk piled a foot high with great red roses.

Then the people began to arrive. It seemed the whole county was there. My eyes began to pop out

of my head as one after another of the celebrities began to arrive. The School Board from Spencer came *en phalanx,* and in marching order behind them came the high school pupils with Justice at their head. The parents of the pupils were all there in state and it soon became evident that we would have to hold our closing exercises outdoors, as the schoolhouse would not hold one-tenth of the crowd.

I was rushing around like a fire engine with the steering gear gone, trying to find things for various mothers to sit on, when I was conscious of a solemn hush, and with a flourish the county school commissioners drove up and with them came Miss Fairlee, the Commission Lady.

Then there broke loose a sound of revelry by day. My scholars did the folk dances and gave the little play I taught them; the Camp Fire Girls held a ceremonial meeting and gave demonstrations of poncho rolling, camp cooking, etc., while the boys had an exhibition of the articles they had made from wood, out of the Dan Beard book.

Then in a speech, which was more earnest than eloquent, I gave to the school the furnishings from the House of the Open Door, together with the

graphophone, the lantern and the slides, to have and to hold, to be the foundation of a new House of the Open Door. There was tumultous applause, and I sat down, red and perspiring, and my part of the show was over.

Thereupon, up rose Absalom Butts, punched in the back as I could see by three or four of the other boys, and, swallowing his fourteen-year-old embarrassment as well as he could, he thrust into my hands a little blue velvet case, mumbling the while, "It's yours. From the school. In token of our—of our——"

Here he forgot his speech, looked around wildly, and then burst out:

"We're givin' it to you because you showed us such a good time, and we're sorry you're goin' away!" Then he fled to his place and hid his blushes behind Henry Smoot's red head.

I opened the case and took out a dear little gold wrist watch. I started to thank them, but choked utterly when I thought of the sacrifices it must have cost some of those people to help buy that watch.

But this was no time for tears. The main dish of the feast was being brought in. The chief of

the County school commissioners, the guest of honor, rose pompously and made his way to the front after being ceremoniously introduced by Elijah Butts. After much clearing of the throat he began a flowery speech about the fame that had been gained throughout the county by the little schoolhouse at our Corners on account of its Red Cross activities and Patriotic Pageants; how it had been made the social center for the people all around and had helped educate them to better things; how the boys and girls had learned more useful things from me than from anyone else who had ever taught there; and how Miss Fairlee, who had come from the East to study rural school conditions in our section had been quite carried away with my work, and so on, *ad infinitum.*

Then, having loaded his cannon very carefully, so to speak, he proceeded to fire it into the crowd with telling effect. The County school commissioners, he announced with a fine air of jocularity, had heard that I was carrying the schoolhouse around with me wherever I went, and as they were afraid it might get mislaid some day they had voted to build a new brick schoolhouse on a foundation; one

that couldn't be moved. A new schoolhouse for our district! Nobody had ever dared hope for such a thing, not even in their wildest dreams. And it seems that I had precipitated all this good fortune!

Later on I happened to hear this same commissioner congratulating Elijah Butts on the good teacher he had picked, and Elijah swelled up like a pouter pigeon and replied:

"Yes, sir, I spotted her for a good one the minute I laid eyes on her. It was me that persuaded the Board to hire her when some of them was holdin' back, favorin' a different kind of female. Yessir, it was me that picked her!"

Justice, who had also overheard the conversation, winked solemnly and we both fled where we could have our laugh out unnoticed.

But the best part of it all came after the Big Show was over. Miss Fairlee came up and took me by the arm and strolled away with me.

"My dear," she said, "would you consider leaving this place and coming East with me? I need an assistant in my Social Settlement work for the summer, and there's no one I've met in the whole country that would fill the bill as well as you. For hand-

ling difficult situations you are a perfect marvel. Your talents are wasted out here—anyone can carry on the work that you have started so wonderfully. Won't you please come?"

We talked about it a bit, and where do you suppose this Social Settlement is? Where but in the one spot on earth that I'd rather be than any other! The same city, my dears, that has the honor of being your home! It's all settled now, and I am to go, after my visit to the Dalrymples. Mother is going into a big Sanitarium, and I am going to work with Miss Fairlee through the summer.

Clear the track! The Winnebago Special is about to start once more! O my Winnies, don't you see the miracle of it all? Here I was, pining to live in a House by the Side of the Road, when all the time I *was* living in a House by the Side of the Road! It was my little despised schoolhouse. I was sent here by fate to prove myself worthy or unworthy of what she had in store for me. I was taken away from you that I might come back to a richer, fuller life than I had dreamed of in the old days. It is all part of a Plan, so big and wonderful that I lose my breath when I think of it. But whatever the

Plan may turn out to be in the future, there's only one thing about it that interests me now, and that is, I'm coming back to you. I'm coming back! Back to my Winnies! Hang out the latchstring and remove everything breakable, for the wanderer is coming home!

Your thrice-blessed

KATHERINE.

THE END

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